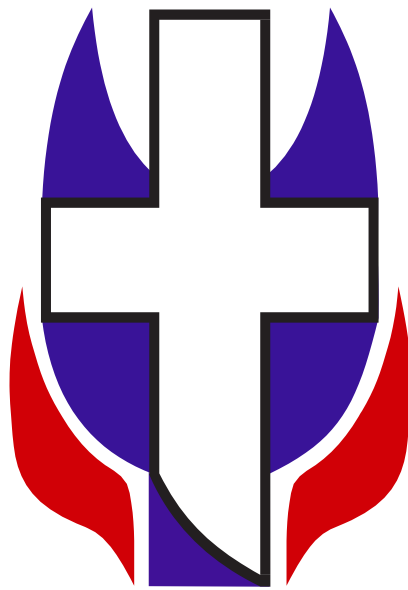


THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

**SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS FOR
THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION
2017**

**Silveira House, Harare
11th July - 14th July 2017**

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UPCSA MODERATORS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

YEAR	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	EXECUTIVE COMMISSION	NAME OF MODERATOR	PRESBYTERIES VISITED
1999	Port Elizabeth	Bryanston	The Rev CW Leeuw FICB	Drakensberg & Zambia
2000	Gordon's Bay	Pretoria	The Rev AD Vorster BD, MTh	EGoli
2001	Benoni	Parkview	The Rev MT Chigwida BA, MDiv	Limpopo & E.Griqualand
2002	Pretoria	Strubensvalley	The Rev MK Boshomane DipTheol,BTh(Hons)	Thekwini
2003	East London	Mulbarton	The Rev GA Duncan Bed, BD. MTh, DTh	Zimbabwe & Zambia
2004	Bryanston	Benoni	The Rev J Pillay BTh.(Hons) MTh, PhD	Mthatha
2005		Kempton Park	The Rev J Pillay BTh.(Hons) MTh, PhD	Transkei
2006		Botha's Hill, Kwa Zulu Natal	The Rev J Pillay BTh.(Hons) MTh, PhD	Western Cape
2006	Livingstone		The Rev WD Pool BA (Hons)	
2007		Orlando	The Rev WD Pool BA (Hons)	Thukela
2008		Gcuwa, Butterworth	The Rev WD Pool BA (Hons)	
2008	Eston, Kwa Zulu Natal		The Rev C Mkandawire DipTh, BTh	
2009		Moregloed, Tshwane	The Rev C Mkandawire DipTh, BTh	Free State
2010		No Exco	The Rev C Mkandawire DipTh, BTh	Tshwane
2010	Vereeniging, Lekoa		The Rev Dr G Marchinkowski BA BD DMin	
2011			The Rev Dr G Marchinkowski BA BD DMin	Lekoa
2012		Perridgevale, Port Elizabeth	The Rev Dr G Marchinkowski BA BD DMin	Central Cape
2012	Stellenbosch, Western Cape		The Rev RJ Botsis BA	Amathole
2013		Kimberley	The Rev RJ Botsis BA	Limpopo
2014	Limpopo		The Rev ME Ramulondi BTh (Hons)	Zimbabwe
2015		East Griqualand	The Rev ME Ramulondi BTh (Hons)	Mthatha
2016	East London		The Rev Dr R Munthali BTh PhD	Transkei
2017		Harare, Zimbabwe	The Rev Dr R Munthali BTh PhD	Highveld

**THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2017**

(THEME: A Spirit Driven Church)

DRAFT AGENDA

Tuesday, 11th July - Friday, 14th July 2017

SESSION	TIME	EVENT	LENGTH
<u>MONDAY, 10 JULY 2017:</u>			
	14h00	Arrival and registration (Silveira House)	
	18h00	<u>SUPPER</u>	
<u>TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2017:</u> (Sola Scriptura)			
	07h30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	
FIRST	09h00	Constituting/Opening Service (City Church)	90
		<i>Welcome</i>	
		<i>Public Worship</i>	
		<i>Roll of Commissioners</i>	
		<i>Moderators Address</i>	
		<i>Holy Communion</i>	
		<i>In Memoriam Minutes</i>	
		<i>First call for Notices of Motion</i>	
	10h30	<u>TEA</u>	30
SECOND	11h30	General Session	60
		<i>Local arrangements</i>	
		<i>Assembly Business Committee</i>	
		<i>Final call for Notices of Motion</i>	
		<i>Clerk of Assembly</i>	
		<i>Changes in the Ministry</i>	
		<i>Overtures</i>	
		<i>Nominations (Preliminary report)</i>	
	12h30	<u>LUNCH</u>	60
THIRD	13h30	Listening Session (1) Executive Session	150
		Allocation of Notices of Motion	
		General Secretary	30
		Working group on Associations	25
		Finance and Audit	30
		Pension Funds	15
		Church Office	25
		Court of Assembly, AARP& Commissions	10
		Priorities and Resources	15
FOURTH	16h00	Insaka Session (1)	120
	18h00	Closing devotions	30
	18h30	<u>SUPPER</u>	

**THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2017**

(THEME: *A Spirit Driven Church*)

DRAFT AGENDA

SESSION	TIME	EVENT	LENGTH
<u>WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 2017:</u> (Sola Fide)			
	07h30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	60
FIFTH	08h30	Morning Devotions	30
	09h00	Decision Session (1)	90
		<i>General Secretary</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Working group on Associations</i>	<i>15</i>
		<i>Finance and Audit</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Pension Funds</i>	<i>5</i>
		<i>Church Office</i>	<i>15</i>
		<i>Court of Assembly, AARP & Commissions</i>	<i>5</i>
		<i>Priorities and Resources</i>	<i>10</i>
	10h30	<u>TEA</u>	30
SIXTH	11h00	Listening Session (2)	120
		<i>Ministry</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Church Associations</i>	<i>10</i>
		<i>Faith and Order</i>	<i>25</i>
		<i>Church Unity Commission</i>	<i>10</i>
	12h35	<i>Ecumenical Relationships</i>	<i>25</i>
	13h00	Ecumenical delegates	60
	13h30	<u>LUNCH</u>	60
	14h30	Insaka Session (2)	90
	16h00	<u>TEA</u>	30
SEVENTH	16h30	Possible unfinished business	60
	17h30	Evening Devotions	30
	18h00	<u>SUPPER</u>	60
	19h00	Local reception	60

**THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2017**

(THEME: A Spirit Driven Church)

DRAFT AGENDA

SESSION	TIME	EVENT	LENGTH
<u>THURSDAY, 13 JULY 2017:</u>			
		(Sola Gratia)	
	07h30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	
EIGHTH	08h30	Morning Devotions	30
	09h00	Decision Session (2)	90
		<i>Ministry</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Church Associations</i>	<i>15</i>
		<i>Faith and Order</i>	<i>35</i>
		<i>Ecumenical Relationships</i>	<i>20</i>
	10h30	<u>TEA</u>	30
NINTH	11h00	Listening Session (3)	120
		<i>Church and Society</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Communications</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Education and Training</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Stewardship</i>	<i>20</i>
		<i>Mission and Discipleship</i>	<i>40</i>
	13h00	<u>LUNCH</u>	60
TENTH	14h00	Celebrating 500 Years of Reformation	120
ELEVENTH	16h00	Insaka Session (3)	120
	17h30	Evening Devotions	30
	18h00	<u>SUPPER</u>	
TWELFTH	19h00	Valedictory Service	
		<i>Recognition of Retiring Ministers</i>	60

**THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2017**

(THEME: A Spirit Driven Church)

DRAFT AGENDA

SESSION	TIME	EVENT	LENGTH
<u>FRIDAY, 14 JULY 2017:</u>			
		(Solus Christus)	
	07h30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	
THIRTEENTH	08h15	Decision Session (3)	55
		<i>Church and Society</i>	<i>15</i>
		<i>Communications</i>	<i>5</i>
		<i>Education and Training</i>	<i>10</i>
		<i>Stewardship</i>	<i>5</i>
		<i>Mission and Discipleship</i>	<i>15</i>
		<i>Records</i>	<i>5</i>
FOURTEENTH	09h10	Closing Service (Silveira House)	
50		<i>Moderator's Address</i>	

INSAKA GROUPS

Supplementary Report to Executive Commission 2017

GROUP ONE

The Rev Sello P Molepo (FACILITATOR)
The Rev Benjamin Z Mkentane
The Rev Jeremy Smith
The Rev Panji Nkosi
The Rev Mzwamadoda Mfene
Mr V Velaphi B Ndlovu
Mr G Jakuja
Mr Brendon Asch
Miss IVT Nxumalo
Mr Henry Chivhanga

GROUP TWO

Mr G Mbandazayo (FACILITATOR)
The Rev Masauso Nyirenda
The Rev Mashiane Letseleha
The Rev Mathemba Tati
The Rev Vusi Mabo
The Rev Mhlupheki Nthali
Mr Gordon Campbell
Mr Nkululeko Gam
MR SD Moloi

GROUP THREE

Mrs Eddie Stopforth (FACILITATOR)
The Rev Rory D Spence
The Rev Thabo S Mohale
The Rev Robert Thema
The Rev F Dumisani Mchunu
Mr Zombe N Sikazwe
Mr MA Nematei
Mr Benson Njobvu
Mr. D Macdonald

GROUP FOUR

The Rev Lita Madaka (FACILITATOR)
The Rev Armando Sontange
The Revd A Zolani Stuurman
The Rev Reuben Daka
The Rev Tinashe Chemvumi
Mr Velelo Maguga
Mr LJ Mokheseng
Mr John Broom
Mr Victor Letuka
Dr Overs Banda

TRANSACTIONAL AND MISSIONAL PROPOSALS																				
	PAGE	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
CONSTITUTING SESSION																				
Roll of Commissioners	1/239																			
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GENERAL SESSION:																				
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Changes in the Ministry	15/248																			
Overtures	23																			
Clerk of Assembly	258																			
Nominations																				
DECISION MAKING (1):																				
General Secretary	25	M	M	T	M	T	T	M	M	T										
Supplementary	260	T	M	T	M	M														
Working Group	30	M	M																	
Finance	32	T		M	M	T	T	M	M	T	T	M	T	M	M	M	M	T	M	M
	263		M																	
Audit		M																		
Pension Funds	101	T	M																	
Church Office	104	M	M	M	M															
	276	M	M	T																
Supplementary		M	M	T																
Audit	98	T																		
Court/AARP	108/277																			
Sample vs. SO Loni	278	M	M	M	M															
JPL Wolmarans	281	M	M	M	T															
Synod of Zambia	108	M	M																	
Priorities and Resources	111	T	M	M	M	M														
DECISION MAKING (2):																				
Ministry	115	T	T	M	T	T	T	T	T	M	M	M	M	T	M					
	294	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M					
Supplementary		M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	T	M					
Church Associations	126	T	M	M	M	M	M	M	T	T										
Supplementary	303	T	T	M																
Church design	155	M	M	M																
Faith and Order	128	M																		
Confessions	149	M	M	M	M															
Supplementary	323	M	M	M	M															
Ecumenical Relationships	157	T	T	M	M	T	T	T	T		M	T	M	M						
Supplementary	338	T	M	M	M	M	M	M	T											
DECISION MAKING (3):																				
Church and Society	170	M	M	M	M	M	T	T												
Communications	310	M	M																	
Education and Training	201	T	M	M	T															
Supplementary (PEF)	304																			
Stewardship	205	M	M	M	M	M	M													
Mission and Discipleship	223/312	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	T	M	M	M	M
Ministers Emeritus	17/249																			

PROPOSALS IN DECISION MAKING ORDER

Report to the Executive Commission 2017

Synod of Zambia

- 1 Executive Commission receives the report.
- 2 Executive Commission notes the findings of the Special Synod Commission of Inquiry.
- 3 Executive Commission notes the recommendations as item 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5.

MINISTER EMERITUS

Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. SF Chonco the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
2. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. AJ Combrink the status of Minister Emeritus from **28 February 2018** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
3. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. EG Goyns the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 May 2017** (retrospectively) and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds she may reside.
4. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. TH Hans the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
5. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. David Hutt the status of Minister Emeritus from **30 April 2018**, and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
6. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. SS Mvulana the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
7. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. ST Ndindwa the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 May 2018** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
8. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. R Weller the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds she may reside.

OVERTURES

Recommendation:

The TPYF recommends that the Church Presbytery considers naming the Presbytery "Tiyo Soga Memorial Presbytery". During the 2016 TPYF Conference that was held at Irvin Njoloza Memorial Congregation, TPYF members agreed that the name "Tiyo Soga Memorial Presbytery" was relevant for our Presbytery due to the following reasons:

- i) Tiyo Soga's impact and the role he played in the Church and the former Transkei community. During his reign in the former Transkei he managed to build sound relations with the traditional leaders of the times such as King Hintsa "Ahhhhh Zanzolo".
- ii) The Presbytery has a valid claim to Rev. Tiyo Soga as he not only became a minister at Tutura Congregation but his grave is at the same place and a monument has been built for him and this is one of South Africa's National Heritage Sites.
- iii) During the 2016 General Assembly (GA) sitting in Amathole Presbytery, the GA took a resolution of celebrating 160 years of Tiyo Soga's contribution to the Presbyterian Church in every gathering, it is befitting as well that the Presbytery in its celebration goes further and honour his invaluable contribution by naming the Presbytery "Tiyo Soga Memorial Presbytery".

The TPYF requested Bro. P. Mdleleni and Str. Q. Xalisa to speak on behalf of the TPYF on this overture. After discussion the Council made an amendment as follows:

"the name should be 'TIYO SOGA MEMORIAL PRESBYTERY'". The Council agreed about the changing of the name and appointed Rev. L Madaka and Elder T Mbandazayo to support the overture to the 2017 General Assembly Executive Commission in Zimbabwe. The Council also agreed that Bro. Mdleleni and Str Xalisa be part of the delegation and the Presbytery will bear the costs of their travelling.

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Commission receive the report.
2. The Executive Commission gives the ABC the powers to co-opt the four additional members to take care of the gender imbalance and the youth representation on the committee.
3. The Executive Commission instruct all commissioners to attend to all the three sessions of the decision making process.
4. The Executive Commission to instruct all commissioners fill in the evaluation forms by the end of the EXCO.
5. The Executive Commission notes that the investigation to purchase our own Translation Equipment is still on going.
6. The Executive Commission notes that the teams of reference formulated by the ABC have been referred to Priorities and Resources Committee awaiting their approval.
7. The Executive Commission adopts the proposed Draft Agenda as the final Agenda for the 2017 Executive Commission.
8. The Executive Commission adopt the standing orders for the 2017 Executive Commission as contained in the papers to be the guide for ordering of its business.
9. The Executive Commission appoints the following as facilitation Team:
 - 9.1 Drafting team: Rev. Sipho Ncapayi, Rev. D. Mushayavanhu , Nigel Nyamutumbu, Vuyani Maguga .
 - 9.2 Minute Clerks: Rev Zwai Mtyobile, Rev Lydia Neshangwe, Col. Stephen Mwaekwa.
 - 9.3 Records: Miss E. White, Rev. Patricia Phiri.
 - 9.4 Scrutineer for the minutes: Rev. Jacob Manda, Rev. Matemba.
 - 9.5 Media: Lazarus Sajeni, Watson Moyo, Nigel Nyamutumbu.
 - 9.6 Vote of thanks to the Moderator : Mr. G Mbandazayo.
 - 9.7 Vote of thanks to Hosting Presbytery :Rev. Patricia Phiri.

CLERK OF ASSEMBLY

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission endorses the process for the submission of the reports as contained in the Standing Orders.
3. The Executive Commission instructs Presbytery Clerks to submit relevant Presbytery reports timeously to all General Assemblies and Executive Commissions.
4. The Executive Commission resolves that all future papers of General Assembly and Executive Commission be printed by the LECSA Printers.
5. The Executive Commission resolves that, the dates for General Assembly 2018 be set as Saturday 7 July 2018 until Friday 13 July 2018.
6. The Executive Commission resolves that General Assembly 2018 be held within the bounds of the Presbytery of Highveld.
7. The Executive Commission notes the challenges concerning the Tiyo Soga House.

GENERAL SECRETARY

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission
 - a. appreciates the overview of the UPCSA in light of the general characteristics of a healthy organisation; and
 - b. encourages the Presbyteries and Congregations to study their circumstances against the characteristics for continuous improvement. (M)
3. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that some progress is made towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan;
 - b. commends the Auditors' Committee for undertaking to perform the function of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and
 - c. encourages all the structures to cooperate towards the successful implementation of the Plan. (M)
4. The Executive Commission commends the General Assembly Committees on the good work. (T)

5. The Executive Commission
 - a. commends those Presbyteries that do comply with the decisions of the General Assembly by submitting relevant information in good time; and
 - b. encourages all the Presbyteries to improve on leadership and administrative skills to ensure compliance with the General Assembly decisions. (M)
6. The Executive Commission notes that all the Associations submitted names of the corresponding members to the following committees: Finance, Mission and Discipleship, Church and Society, and Priorities and Resources. (T)
7. The Executive Commission appreciates the good relationships between the UPCS/LECSA and UPCS/UCZ. (T)
8. The Executive Commission
 - a. supports the idea of the retreat of the ministers' spouses in October 2017; and
 - b. encourages the Congregations to help the spouses with the travelling costs. (M)
9. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes the slow progress made to end the legal disputes.
 - b. appeals to all in the UPCS to pray for the end of all the legal disputes. (M)
10. Notes with appreciation the dedication of the Tiyo Soga House staff in serving the UPCS. (T)

Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that
 - a. the Mediation Seminar was conducted; and
 - b. the pool of 11 trained mediators has been established. (T)
3. The Executive Commission encourages the Councils of the UPCS to
 - a. give mediation a chance before resorting to formal legal processes; and
 - b. build mediation resources at congregational and Presbytery levels. (M)
4. The Executive Commission encourages the Congregations and Presbyteries to pay attention to and pursue the seven ministries as a contribution towards a balanced and peaceful society. (T)
5. The Executive Commission
 - a. expresses its concern about the deplorable circumstances in which some of our ministers, especially the black ministers do their work;
 - b. encourages the Presbyteries to enhance their pastor parorum role;
 - c. requests the Ministry Committee to work out a plan on how to offer support to and encourages the development of ministers after ordination; and
 - d. agrees to dedicate the year 2018 to the promotion of the profile of a UPCS minister. (M)
6. The Executive Commission instructs the Church and Society to guide the UPCS on the dynamics and the direction the Church may take on the Israel/Palestine issue. (M)

WORKING GROUP ON ASSOCIATIONS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission reaffirms the call to all ministers to work towards the unity, healing and reconciliation of the Church Associations and to support the work of the Assembly Working Group on Associations in their respective congregations and Presbyteries. (M)
3. The Executive Commission requests all the Associations to actively work toward the goal of bringing the 8 organisations into 4 by the 2018 General Assembly. (M)

FINANCE

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the various schedules and reports on assessments. (T)
3. The Executive Commission is requested to mandate the Finance Committee to carry on with the official and acceptable process of handing the land over to the residents. (M)
4. The Executive Commission again instructs all associations to submit their final annual audited reports, as at December 2016, by no later than 30th September, 2017. (M)

5. The Executive Commission again instructs Presbyteries to submit reports on non-contributory congregations with reasons for non-compliance, by 30th September 2017 (Annexure 9). (M)
6. The Executive Commission reminds all congregations of their obligation to pay assessments. (T)
7. The Executive Commission reminds all Zimbabwean congregations of their obligation to pay assessments into the Zimbabwe Bank Account. (T)
8. The Executive Commission (a) extends the current procedure to write off all outstanding assessment arrears for those congregations, supported by their Presbytery, who can show ability to meet future assessments in full; and (b) extends 2% rebate until next General Assembly. (M)
9. For congregations that are receiving grants from any committee of the General Assembly, Presbytery or Synod and do not show any commitment in paying the assessments (i.e. the minimum required), the grant should be stopped, till such time there is commitment to pay assessments. (M)
10. The Executive Commission accepts the Audited Financial Statements for 12 months to 30 June 2016. (T)
11. The Executive Commission notes the Audit Convener's Report. (T)
12. The Executive Commission accepts the Risk analysis and corresponding risk matrix. (M)
13. The Executive Commission notes the source of support for retired ministers through the RB Hagart Trust. (T)
14. The Executive Commission approves the Sedibeng Trust audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016. (M)
15. The Executive Commission approves the budget for 2017/18 endorsing the need for stricter financial controls at all levels. (M)
16. The Executive Commission authorises the Finance Committee to continue to explore the opening of a bank account in Zambia so that assessments can be directed to supporting their own ministry students. (M)
17. The Executive Commission instructs the Manual Committee to make the necessary changes to provide for congregations failing to pay at least minimum assessments to lose their voting rights in all councils of the UPCS, and if their financial statements have not been submitted, and are not up to date. (M)
18. The Executive Commission endorses thanks to the Investment Committee members, the CFO and all admin and finance staff. (T)
19. The Executive Commission instructs all Presbyteries to assist congregations in transferring the property and obtaining title deeds from their local municipal offices for properties still in the local municipality's name. (M)
20. The Executive Commission again instructs all Presbyteries and Churches to submit their original title deeds to the Central Office by latest 31 January 2018, if not done so already. (M)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. The General Assembly receives the report.
2. The General Assembly approves the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee. (M)

PENSION FUNDS

1. That the report be received.
2. That the Assembly thanks the advisors and contractors to the Fund for the assistance given to the Trustees over the past period. (T)
3. That the report be adopted. (M)

CHURCH OFFICE

1. The Executive Commission accepts the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the extension of the contract of the CFO Mr Geoff Jooste until August 2018. (M)
3. The Executive Commission approves the inclusion of a Human Resources portfolio in the job description of the CFO. (M)
4. The Executive Commission receives and accepts the withdrawal of Dr I Taylor from the Convenership and condones the arrangement made by the Committee to appointing an acting Convener, and appoints the Rev

Prof Masango as the Convener of the Committee until the next General Assembly. (M)

5. The Executive Commission adopts the practice that all the members of the General Assembly Committees should sign confidentiality agreements, which remain binding during and after their service period in the respective committees. (M)

Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the goal setting and performance appraisal workshop for General Assembly Committee Convenors, their respective Central Office staff members, and the alignment of these goal setting and performance appraisal activities with current Labour law. (M)
3. The Executive Commission notes the current negotiations concerning the relocation of the Central Office to Gateway Uniting Presbyterian Church. (M)
4. The Executive Commission notes that COC members from Zimbabwe and Zambia are now able to attend COC meetings at Central Office. (T)

COURT OF ASSEMBLY & AARP

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

MATTER INVOLVING SEMPLE MEMORIAL CONGREGATION/REV. SO LONI/AMATHOLE PRESBYTERY AND AARP OF THE UPCSA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that the appointment of the Rev Loni to the Semple Memorial Congregation lapsed on 31 August 2014 as determined in the processes leading to the decision of the AARP. (M)
3. The Executive Commission encourages the Presbytery of Amathole to facilitate the healing and reconciliation processes within the Semple Memorial Congregation. (M)
4. The Executive Commission encourages the Presbytery of Amathole to facilitate a process of healing for the Rev. SO Loni. (M)
5. The Executive Commission declares that this matter has now put to closure. (M)

COMMITTEE OF THE REV PROF JLP WOLMARANS REPORT

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission ratifies the appointment of this Committee by the Moderator of General Assembly. (M)
3. The Executive Commission dismisses all the 8 charges issued against Rev. Prof. J.L.P. Wolmarans. (M)
4. The Executive Commission instruct the Faith and Order Committee to convene conferences in various geographical areas where members of the UPCSA may debate some or all of the issues raised in the papers written by Rev Prof J.L.P. Wolmarans and Liberal Theology in general and submit a report to the 2018 General Assembly of the outcomes. (M)
5. The Executive Commission dissolve the Committee with thanks. (T)

CLERK- SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

- 1 Executive Commission receives the report.
- 2 Executive Commission notes the findings of the Special Synod Commission of Inquiry. (M)
- 3 Executive Commission notes the recommendations as item 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5. (M)

PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes a) that the envisaged meeting of the retired ministers did not take place largely because of the hardships on the retired Ministers and b) that the retired ministers will be invited to

Ministers Conferences. (T)

3. The Executive Commission amends the duties of the Moderator of General Assembly to include presenting a report to the General Assembly at the end of term of office. (M)
4. The Executive Commission instructs the Assembly Business Committee to coordinate the Peer Review Mechanism for the General Assembly Committees. (M)
5. The Executive Commission approves the holding of regional Ministers and Spouses' Conferences in place of the one scheduled Ministers and Spouses' Conference and instructs the Priorities and Resources Committee to facilitate accordingly. (M)
6. The Executive Commission notes the progress made towards celebrating the UPCSA 's 20th Anniversary and urges congregations, Associations, presbyteries and Synods to give ongoing support to the preparations. (M)

MINISTRY

1. The Executive Commission receives the report with thanks.
2. The Executive Commission notes that a fitting farewell for the Rev. Dr. Eddie Germiquet has been celebrated by the Ministry Committee in January 2017. (T)
3. The Executive Commission notes that the Rev. Dr. Pat Baxter has reported as new Ministry Secretary of the Ministry Committee of General Assembly from December 2016 and wishes her well for her appointment. (T)
4. The Executive Commission instructs the Ministry Committee to call a Propeller Conference; each Presbytery represented by two delegates:
 - a) to determine what the UPCSA require for the training for the Ministry,
 - b) to review current and other theological institution that have been submitted by Presbyteries and
 - c) to report the outcome at the 2018 General Assembly. (M)
5. Executive Commission notes the removal of Mr Walazi Namaja as a student for the Ministry. (T)
6. The Executive Commission approves the payments of R8, 000 residential fees by the UPCSA students for the Ministry at Sedibeng House of Studies with effect from 2018. (T)
7. The Executive Commission notes that a process has begun to develop materials to be used for ministerial formation for both the students for the Ministry and PAT. (T)
8. The Executive Commission notes that at the time of the writing of this report no report has been received from the Synod of Zambia regarding the disruption of the PAT conference in August 2015. (T)
9. The Executive Commission notes the good work done by the Rev. Prof. Jerry Pillay an academic staff member at the University of Pretoria. (T)
10. The Executive Commission seconds the Rev. Sibusiso Zungu as chaplain to the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). (M)
11. The Executive Commission receives the application of the Rev Jonathan Payne of the Anglican Church to the UPCSA and admit him in the roll of the UPCSA ministers. (M)
12. The Executive Commission seconds the Rev. Fundiswa Kobo UNISA as Lecturer in the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology. (M)
13. The Executive Commission seconds the Rev. Toto John Mokoena as chaplain to the South African Policy Service (SAPS). (M)
14. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. Buhle Mpofu the seat within the bounds of the Presbytery of eThekweni.(T)
15. The Executive Commission encourages all Presbyteries to ensure that the survey designed on Ministerial Marriage and Family Care is completed and returned to the GA Ministry Committee office by the 15th October, 2017. (M)

Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the supplementary report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that the Ministry Committee is in the process of developing materials for Presbyteries on how to make a provision for bi-vocational ministry in the UPCSA. (M)
3. The Executive Commission instructs the Ministry Committee to hold a conference to work out the process to be followed in reviewing the current and recommended theological institutions and report to 2018 General Assembly. (M)
4. The Executive instructs the Finance Committee to make funds available for the Theological review conference. (M)
5. The Executive Commission notes that the Ministry Committee is working on liaising with the Manual Committee regarding policies and processes to be included on Bi-Vocational Ministry. (M)
6. The Executive Commission receives the Call Discernment Conference decisions of potential candidates for the Ministry as outlined in the body of the report. (M)
7. The Executive Commission approves a workshop of theologians to start the process of fleshing out an undergirding theology for this new approach (Bio-Vocational Ministry) to the ministry. (M)
8. The Executive Commission adopts the draft document on Ethos, Structure and Resources, the Impact of Inequalities on Decision Making within the UPCSA working document and sends it to Presbyteries for discussion and send their input to the Ministry Committee by the 31st January 2018. (M)
9. The Executive Commission agrees that the matter of readmission of the Rev Patrick Mafa be referred back to the Presbytery of Amathole for further consideration. (M)
10. The Executive Commission agrees that the matter of readmission of the Rev Simiso Mncwabe be referred back to the Presbytery of Western Cape for further consideration. (M)
11. The Executive Commission fully admits the Rev S. Molokoane as a minister of Word and Sacrament in the UPCSA. (M)
12. The Executive Commission fully admits Rev. M. Njeza into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the UPCSA. (M)
13. The Executive Commission agrees to second the Rev. M. Brand to the post of Regional Director at Biblica – International Bible Society. (M)
14. The Executive Commission notes that the secondment of the Rev. M. Mohapi lapses at the time of his retirement from the SANDF in December 2017. (T)
15. The Executive Commission notes that the secondment of the Rev Akih to the UPCSA expires at the end of July 2017. (M)

CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the work of the Committee. (T)
3. The Executive Commission encourages GAWG and Church Associations Committee to work together. (M)
4. The Executive Commission agrees that Presbytery Church Associations Conveners become corresponding members of the General Assembly Church Associations Committee. (M)
5. The Executive Commission agrees that for the sake of the UPCSA 20th anniversary celebrations, conferences of all associations be suspended in 2019. (M)
6. The Executive Commission agrees to encourage all members of the UPCSA especially white members to attend the anniversary celebration and all Denominational activities. (M)
7. The Executive Commission instructs associations to work on one rededication message in 2018 especially that it will be their last rededication as separate associations. (M)
8. The Executive Commission acknowledges and commends both the Youth Association and Youth Fellowship for their commitment and great work they do towards their unification. (M)
9. The Executive Commission accepts the reports of Church Associations as attached. (T)

10. The Executive Commission notes that not all associations submitted their report. (T)

Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that the Spiritual Imbizo was successfully held at St Mark's Presbyterian, Daveyton within the Presbytery of the Highveld on 3-4 June 2017. (T)
3. The Executive Committee commends the Associations and the ministers that attended the Imbizo. (T)
4. The Executive Commission encourages Presbyteries to hold the Spiritual Imbizo's. (M)

FAITH AND ORDER

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission points out to the Nominations Committee that the Assembly in 2016 restructured, or rearranged, the "hierarchy" of its commissions, committees and task teams (Proceedings and Decisions of the 12th General Assembly 2016, p.526, 572) and that in terms of that decision the Nominations Committee should nominate conveners for the commissions and the 17 committees listed above (but no longer for the Faith and Order Committee). (M)

WORSHIP

1. The Executive Commission receives the Report.
2. The Executive Commission
 - a) notes that the full document on *Bodily Worship* is on the UPCS website;
 - b) commends the document to the attention of all ministers and everyone else who leads worship in the UPCS;
 - c) urges them to study and apply it; and
 - d) calls for comments on it to be sent to the convener by 28 February 2018. (M)
3. The Executive Commission
 - a) notes the points made in the body of the Report about the Order for the Licensing and Appointment of Probationers;
 - b) replaces the present Order with the amended Order set out in Appendix A; and
 - c) draws the attention of all Presbytery Moderators and Clerks, and candidates for the ministry, to the revised Order. (M)
4. The Executive Commission
 - a) notes the additions spelled out in Appendix B to the document on liturgical Creeds, Confessions and Commandments; and
 - b) again encourages the use of the versions of the liturgical creeds and commandments adopted by the Assembly or Executive Commission in services in the UPCS. (M)
5. The Executive Commission replaces the present set of Narratives with the amended set in Appendix C. (M)
6. The Executive Commission
 - a) reminds all ministers and other preachers in the UPCS that the Revised Common Lectionary is the officially approved lectionary of the UPCS and encourages them to use the lectionary in choosing the lessons to be read and the texts on which to preach Sunday by Sunday;
 - b) draws the attention of all ministers and other preachers to the section of the Report on the Revised Common Lectionary and particularly to the resources commended in it, including the *Word and Worship* series;
 - c) thanks all Ministers who have continued to work for, and contribute to, the *Word and Worship* series and its Afrikaans equivalent, *Woord en Fees*; and
 - d) urges Presbyteries to find out from their ministers and other preachers which of them wish to order copies of the new issue of *Word and Worship* for the liturgical year that starts with Advent every year and order the copies in bulk by June each year. (M)
7. The Executive Commission
 - a) instructs the webmaster to place the revised Review of English Versions of the Bible on the UPCS website; and
 - b) draws the attention of all ministers and leaders of worship and all Bible study leaders to it. (M)
8. The Executive Commission
 - a) instructs the webmaster to place the revised Guide to Marriage Registration on the UPCS website;

- b) draws the attention of all ministers who are, or who are preparing to become, Marriage Officers to the section of the Report on Marriage Solemnization and Registration and to the Guide on the website; and
 - c) again thanks Terry Wilké for his work on this matter and for sharing it with us. (M)
9. The Executive Commission sends the Xhosa translation of the Order for Mngqophiso Service in the *Supplementary Papers for the 12th General Assembly in 2016*, Appendix I, p.498-502 (*Proceedings and Decisions for 2016*, p.498-502) to all Xhosa-speaking congregations for use and comment, all comments and suggestions for its improvement to be sent to the convener by January 31, 2018. (M)
10. The Executive Commission requests all ministers who have produced accurate translations into any of the vernacular languages of the various Orders of services adopted by the Assembly or its Executive Commission to send electronic copies of these to the convener for the record and for placing on the website. (M)

CHURCH DESIGN

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission:
 - a) reminds all congregations that are planning to build churches that they are legally obliged to observe the National Building Regulations (SABS 10100); and
 - b) reminds them of the rule that all such congregations must consult with the Church Design Committee about their plans before they proceed with building. (M)
3. The Executive Commission instructs
 - a) the Assembly Office to go ahead with the printing of the pamphlet on Church Design discussed in the report and advertise its availability at cost price to all congregations as soon as it is available;
 - b) all congregations that are planning to build churches to study the pamphlet in consultation with their architects and builders before finalizing their building plans. (M)
4. The Executive Commission instructs all Presbyteries, before giving approval to any congregations that present any plans for building churches to the Presbyteries for approval, to see to it that the congregations have first taken into careful account
 - a) the national Building Regulations (SABS 10100), and
 - b) the guide on *Church Design*. (M)

CONFESSIONS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission again urges all Ministers and Sessions in the UPCS to
 - a) order enough copies of the document *Celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation* from the Assembly Office or order one copy and photocopy it or photocopy the electronic copy on the website;
 - b) make these available to their congregations; and
 - c) encourage study groups (and where necessary establish study groups) in their congregations and preaching stations to study and discuss this document during 2017. (M)
3. The Executive Commission
 - a) adopts the amendments to paragraphs 17.41, 17.51-57, 16.116, 16.118 and 16.162 of the *Manual* set out in Appendix A;
 - b) refers the *proposed* amended form of para 17.62 along with an explanation that the UPCS is historically a confessional Church and an outline of the reason why we wish to amend the para to
 - the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa with the request that it approve or condone the proposed amended para in terms of para 6.32.1; and
 - the CUC with the request that it approve or condone the proposed amended para in terms of the Guidelines for Member Churches of the CUC agreed upon in 1996 or refer it to its member Churches for them to consider approving or condoning it, if the CUC deems that to be necessary. (M)
4. The Executive Commission at the same time sends the correct, updated subheading and wording of para no. 3 in the "Guidelines for the Member Churches of the CUC, i.e. (para 16.32.2.3 in the *Manual*, cf. para 16.116, 17.62) to the CUC and/its member Churches for them to note and approve. (M)
5. The Executive Commission instructs the Clerk to see to it that the Essential Points of Doctrine are placed in the *Manual* after the UPCS Confession of Faith. (M)

Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the Supplementary Report.
2. The Executive Commission approves the Confirmation Lesson in Appendix C below for use and comment, all comments to be sent to the convener. (M)

3. The Executive Commission notes Appendix D and refers it to the Court of Assembly to: "The Executive Commission in referring the complaint and the charges against Prof. J.L.P. Wolmarans back to the Court of Assembly, refers Appendix D to it as well." (M)
4. The Executive Commission refers Chapter 18, Section 6, of the Manual to the Manual Committee to redraft more explicitly and clearly all points in it that can be misunderstood. (On this see Appendix D.) (M)
5. The Executive Commission instructs the Assembly Office to insert the document on Essential Doctrine into the Manual, after the Confession of Faith. (M)

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. The Executive Commission receives.
2. The Executive Commission notes with appreciation the commitment of the ERC in ensuring that the UPCSA participates meaningfully in ecumenical relationships. (T)
3. The Executive Commission notes the goals of the ERC for the term 2016-2018. (T)
4. The Executive Commission encourages the Presbyteries, congregations and other structures to promote and engage in ecumenical activities. (M)
5. The Executive Commission
 - a. Commends the Synod of Zambia and the Presbytery of Zimbabwe for consistent and transparent reporting on their ecumenical involvement; and
 - b. Urge the Presbyteries in South Africa to do the same. (M)
6. The Executive Commission congratulates the Rev Peter Langerman on his being re-elected as the Chairman of the CUC.(T)
7. The Executive Commission commends the Rev Prof Jerry Pillay for the successful completion of his seven years term as the President of the WCRC.(T)
8. The Executive Commission notes that the UPCSA has been represented in the SACC Triennial Conference, CWM Africa Regions' MMF, CWM Members' meeting and WCRC General Council.(T)
9. The Executive Commission notes that the UPCSA will be represented in the ACRC and AACC conferences in Kigali, Rwanda in June/July 2017. (T)
10. The Executive Commission notes that there has been no progress in the UCCSA-UPCSA negotiations due to the team finding it difficult to meet. (T)
11. The Executive Commission approves the MoUs with LECSA and UCZ, respectively. (M)
12. The Executive Commission notes that the PCEA and the UPCSA delegations held talks in Nairobi on 22 July 2016 and agreed on establishing partnership and cooperation based on sharing of information, resources and expertise.(T)
13. The Executive Commission mandates the ERC to engage in talks to establish partnership with EVCMY. (M)
14. The Executive Commission mandates the ERC to engage in talks to establish relationship with PCI. (M)

Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the progress made in the UCCSA/UPCSA union talks.(T)
3. The Executive Commission
 - a. approves the arrangement for the ceremonial launch to be held in Durban on the 1st October 2017 at the General Assembly of the UCCSA;
 - b. encourages the UPCSA to commit themselves to and pray for the process and those close to UCCSA congregations to hold joint services on 1st October 2017; and
 - c. encourages Congregations/Regions/Presbyteries/Synods and Associations to work together deliberately from the day of the launch until the unity is realized. (M)
4. The Executive Commission approves the names "Joint Commission on Union (JCU)" for the Negotiations Team and "Steering Committee" for the Sub-Team. (M)

5. The Executive Commission
 - a. approves the six (6) proposed task teams and the coordinators;
 - b. asks the Nominations Committee to nominate two (2) members to serve in each of the task teams; and
 - c. agrees to ensure consistency by not changing the members that serve in the JCU and task teams, unless there is a pressing reason to do so. (M)
6. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that the WCRC will sign the statement for association with the JDDJ at the General Council at Leipzig, Germany;
 - b. supports the participation of the UPCSAs in the discussions by the churches in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe on the relations based on the JDDJ and related matters and instructs the ERC to ensure continuous representation of the UPCSAs in those discussions; and
 - c. requests the Faith and Order Committee to study the JDDJ and prepare a user-friendly guide for the members of the UPCSAs to understand the dynamics and implications before the next General Assembly. (M)
7. The Executive Commission agrees to offer moral and diplomatic support to the Tumekutana and PAPMF Conferences that will be held in South Africa in 2018. (M)
8. The Executive Commission
 - a. commends the SACC for the work it achieved through its Unburdening Panel;
 - b. instructs the Church and Society Committee to study the report and follow up on the events arising from that, so as to keep the UPCSAs abreast of the developments in South Africa; and
 - c. instructs the General Secretary to write a letter to congratulate the new National Executive Committee and pledge its support to the leadership. (M)
9. The Executive Commission
 - a. receives CUC report;
 - b. congratulates the Rev Dr Peter Langerman on being re-elected as the CUC Chairperson; and
 - c. encourages the Church Councils and Associations to follow the CUC developments for the unity of the Church. (T)
 - d. Agrees to the admission of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) as a full member of the CUC.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission changes the name of Church and Society to Church in Society. (M)
3. The Executive Commission receives the Eco-Justice report as attached in Appendix A. (M)
4. The Executive Commission adopts the Church & Society draft policy document as presented in Appendix B. (M)
5. The Executive Commission adopts the Church & Society draft strategy as presented in Appendix C. (M)
6. The Executive Commission receives the Operational Plan for the year 2017/2018 as appended in D. (M)
7. The Executive Commission notes the Liturgy on Human Rights Day as attached in Appendix E. (T)
8. The Executive Commission notes the Liturgy on Water Week as attached in Appendix F. (T)

COMMUNICATIONS Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission urges the administrators of the various groups on Facebook, along with website administrators who invoke the name of the UPCSAs and use its logo to contact the General Assembly office so that a standard and policy can be established in this regard. (M)
3. The Executive Commission encourages our ministers and congregants to contribute news and theological articles and images where appropriate for publication in the Presbyterian Link. (M)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the work being done in ALL the schools across the Denomination. (T)
3. The Executive Commission requests Presbyteries to download or otherwise obtain the training material for the first section of the "Basic Eldership Course" and also to contact Eddie Stopforth

(eddiestop@global.co.za) to arrange “train-the-trainer” workshops. (M)

4. The Executive Commission receives and ratifies the Kids Alive drive for immediate implementation. (M)

PEF Supplementary

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission expresses its sincerest thanks to all whose donations to the PEF ensure the ongoing work of the fund and thanks the members of the outgoing Task Team for their service and commitment to the Fund over many years. (T)
3. The Executive Commission declares Sunday, 17 June, 2018 PEF Sunday and requests all congregations to hold a retiring offering for the PEF on that Sunday or another of the congregation’s choosing in June, 2018. (M)
4. The Executive Commission urges all ministers and Session Clerks to screen applications stringently, by checking that applicants have completed the forms correctly and in full, and included all required documentation, before signing the forms. (M)
5. The Executive Commission notes that the deadline for submission of completed application forms is 30 September annually and that late submissions will not be accepted. (T)

STEWARDSHIP

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission instructs Presbyteries to place stewardship as a mission priority of the denomination on their agenda and support its work in all ways possible. (M)
3. The Executive Commission:
 - a. approves stewardship strategic plan for five years commencing in August 2017.
 - b. urges all presbyteries to implement and execute the strategic plan accordingly; and
 - c. instructs sessions, congregations, and church associations to adhere to it.
 - d. reminds all UPCSA ministers of the need to teach congregations about the significance of biblical stewardship;
 - e. calls on all ministers and congregations of the UPCSA to observe January of each year as stewardship month. (M)
4. The Executive Commission approves stewardship committee budget for 2017/18. (M)
5. The Executive Commission instructs stewardship and ministry committees to submit to the 2018 General Assembly the strategic approach as to how biblical stewardship can be incorporated in ministerial training, including the post academic training phase. (M)
6. The Executive Commission instructs local churches to share resources and work together on many areas. (M)
7. Instructs the webmaster to place the strategic plan, operational and communication plans on the UPCSA website. (M)

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHP

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes and gives thanks for the growth in the Mission Shaped Ministry Course across South Africa, Zimbabwe and soon, Zambia; and commends the course to all members of the UPCSA. (M)
3. The Executive Commission notes the article produced under the Missional Congregations Project entitled, ‘What is a missional congregation?’ and commends it to Sessions/Councils for study. (M)
4. The Executive Commission :
 - (a) notes the definition of a Missional Church for the UPCSA
 - (b) instructs all Assembly committees to study the definition and align their work and goals with it. (M)
5. The Executive Commission commends to all ministers the section 1.3 of the report on Missional leadership for study and reflection. (M)

6. The Executive Commission:
 - (a) approves the amendment to the definition of the congregation as contained in the report, and
 - (b) approves the amendments to the categories of congregations in the UPCSAs as contained in Appendix A to the report. (M)
7. The Executive Commission encourages the Mission and Discipleship Committee in its continued efforts of consulting with Presbyteries and offering support and advice on being missional. (M)
8. The Executive Commission
 - (a) notes the successful Presbytery M&D Conveners consultation held in February 2017, and
 - (b) commends to the UPCSAs for study and reflection the reports from the various conveners on the contexts of the presbyteries contained in Appendix B to this report
 - (c) commends to sessions/councils the 'Listening to your context' document for use in better understanding the needs of the community in which their congregation is situated. (M)
9. The Executive Commission notes the dates and theme of the 2017 Inspire Conference and encourages all members of the UPCSAs to consider attending the conference. (M)
10. The Executive Commission encourages presbyteries to consider initiating strategic partnerships between 2 or more congregations in a given area who are struggling to achieve sustainability on their own. (M)
11. The Executive Commission:
 - (a) calls on all lay persons active in ministries in the Church to consider joining the Order of Lay Ministries;
 - (b) encourages Sessions and Church Councils to familiarise themselves with the rules and procedures of the Order and to identify lay leaders within their congregations who could become members of the Order;
 - (c) encourages Sessions and Church Councils who have already appointed lay leaders to ministry positions included in the OLM to consider assisting these persons to apply to become members of the OLM;
 - (d) instructs Presbyteries to forward the names and contact information of all Lay Preachers within their bounds to the OLM Administrator by 31 August 2017. (M)
12. The Executive Commission notes the study being undertaken by the committee on the role, place and future of congregation commissioned evangelists. (M)
13. The Executive Commission celebrates the new church plants in the UPCSAs as outlined in Appendix D of the report and encourages congregations and Presbyteries to find innovative ways to plant new worshipping communities and to share those stories with the UPCSAs through the M&D committee. (M)
14. The Executive Commission commends the course 'Broadcast – a bible study on evangelism' to the UPCSAs as a tool for equipping members in the task of witnessing to others about Jesus. (M)
15. The Executive Commission notes the mission study trip undertaken to the Synod of Mizoram and instructs the Ecumenical Relationships committee to investigate the possibility of a reciprocal trip by a delegation from the Synod of Mizoram to the UPCSAs. (M)
16. The Executive Commission notes the various interdenominational conferences and consultations that members of the committee attend on behalf of the UPCSAs. (T)
17. The Executive Commission sets the minimum Stipends, monthly travel allowances and pulpit supply fees for Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa as outlined in section 4.2. of the report. (M)
18. The Executive Commission affirms the committee's policy in offering property grants as outlined in section 4.3 of the report. (M)
19. The Executive Commission resolves:
 - (a) to designate the month of October "Mission month" for congregations within the UPCSAs for the fourth consecutive year;
 - (b) that the sermon themes and outlines found in Appendix E to the report may be used by preachers during "Mission month" and distributes these to all ministers and Session/Council Clerks of congregations of the Church. (M)
20. The Executive Commission encourages its members to support the Bible Society in all ways possible. (M)
21. The Executive Commission commends the committee's website (www.upcsa-mad.org.za) to all members of the UPCSAs as a valuable ministry resource. (M)

RECORDS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS OF THE 2017 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

ROLL OF COMMISSIONERS FOR EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2017

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

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IN MEMORIAM MINUTES

Supplementary report to Executive Commission 2017

The Rev Vusumuzi Hamilton Mabaso

The Times And Journey of the Rev Vusumuzi Hamilton Mabaso

Rev Vusumuzi Hamilton Mabaso was born at Steadville in Ladysmith on the 04th on September 1958. He was the first born son of the late Kholiphi Albertina and Mehlwemamba Gebas Mabaso.

He did his primary schooling at Mnambithi Primary school. He began his Secondary Education at Steadville High School and completed his Matric Certificate at St Chat's High School. He was a famous soccer, tennis and golf player. He displayed leadership qualities at a young age and was nominated as a chief prefect in both High Schools.

After matriculation he immediately started his journey into the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Presbyterian Church when he was accepted as a student at the Federal Theological Seminary (FEDSEM) in Pietermaritzburg. He obtained his Diploma in Theology in 1983 and then served his probation in Stilfontein in the Northwest Province. During this period, he got married to Vukile Caroline Bhengu, his high school sweetheart on the 16th of December 1983 and was graced 33 years of married life.

Pursuing his career in the Ministry, he enrolled with University of Westville where he obtained his BTH Degree (Bachelor of Theology). At the tender age of 19 years as a Minister, he dedicated himself to Youth fellowship and mentored a youth who eventually became the Minister of the RPSA, Rev Mabo.

Rev VH Mabaso initiated and co-ordinated the building of the present Khayelihle Congregation at uMlazi and of the Durban Congregation in Lamontville. He showed to be a visionary leader and was nominated as a Moderator of Thekwine and Drakensburg Presbyteries before and after union of the RPCSA and PCSA. He showed to be a dedicated leader and great motivator. He also became an interim Moderator of Newcastle – Dundee and Hammersdale Congregation, where he served for two service term.

He was further assigned to be a member of the General Assembly Business committee (GABC) of RPCSA which was an executive committee by then. As he was a great thinker he was appointed as a member of Special Commission of Union (SCU) negotiating for union between the RPCSA and PCSA. We can affirm him as one of the midwives that brought the baby UPCS (Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa) in to this world, which is now 17 years old. Rev Mabaso was also an active member of the Young Men's Christian Guild (YMCG) which became MCG after the union. Rev Vusumuzi Hmilito had a High Calling and basically served in the Ministry for 35 years from 1984 to 2016.

Besides his dedication in God's Ministry, he was also a community leader. Where he identified a need, he would venture in. He eventually became a business man and showed his leadership qualities. In the Taxi Industry, he was the Chairperson of Lamontville Taxi Association (LTA) from 2010 until 2014. He advocated creation of additional taxi ranks for Lamontville community like Soldiers Way, Mega City and Pine Street. He even initiated opening of offices for proper administration. As passionate community leader, he became also involved in the upgrade of lives of Lamontville and Durban citizens, where he served in various committees and structures.

.....HAI MNTUNGWA NGEKE SIKUQEDE UBUYINDODA EMILENZELENZE!!!!

Rev V Mabaso shall be greatly missed by the Congregation, community he served and sadly by his family, mostly his wife, uMabhengu, 3 sons, granddaughter, brother, sisters, niece and nephews.

The Rev I.G. Mosikare

Rev Itumeleng Gerald Mosikare was born on 3 October 1967 of Presbyterian parents in Kimberley and has lived his whole formative years in the Church. From the age of 18 years, Gerald, affectionately known as "Seun" or "Big John Tate" – or simply "Tate", for short, – was fully immersed in Youth and Choir work and related church activities.

Tate lived in the Vergenoeg mission House from 1984 to 1988, playing a pivotal role in the community youth politics of those turbulent times, influenced by his Christian conviction, but as well by his brother "Marley".

He was accepted as a candidate for the ministry under the late Rev. Rudge Phafuli, who also left a powerful love for the Lord in him. Tate went to study Theology at the (then) University of Durban Westville in KwaZulu-Natal. He was ordained in Kroonstad in 1988 having received his exeat certificate from the ministry committee of the General Assembly of the UPCS.

During his ministry, Tate only served in three congregations, all of them within the bounds of the Presbytery of the Free State, namely: St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Constantia near Kroonstad, Zamdela Presbyterian Church near Sasolburg, and the twinned congregations of Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Kwakwatsi near Koppies and Abner Rabaitse Poho Memorial Presbyterian Church in Refengkgotso near Deneysville. It was while he was serving at these congregations that he also came to be affectionately known as Charma-Boy.

Tate served Presbytery in many committees and of note, he served as Clerk of Presbytery, Convenor of the Stewardship committee, Ministry, and (at the time of his calling) he served as Presbytery Convenor of Justice & Social Responsibility; Planning; and Gender Issues. He also represented Presbytery as Commissioner to General Assembly on several occasions.

Tate was experienced by those who had the privilege and pleasure to know him as likeable, loved, and celebrated by many. Life threw at him a lot of lemons that he always seemed to turn into lemonade. Also, emanating from his prior, first-hand experience of the injustices of the apartheid regime, Tate had (and maintained) a deep aversion to unfair treatment of any kind, and in this token he also fought against the slightest display of unfair prejudice – whether white against black, black against white, male against female, able against disabled, or any other kind of prejudice at all – and never remained quiet in such circumstances: those who knew him can easily recall his frequent objections to such injustices.

In life, Tate loved the Lord Jesus from the bottom of his heart and his soul. Rev Roger Tucker once recounted how he woke up early one morning (before daybreak) during a Presbyterian ministers' retreat to hear someone speaking outside. As he came outside, he found Tate speaking out loudly to the Lord in deep prayer. This is the nature of the servant of the Lord that we got to know and love.

Tate never harboured bitterness and was quick to forgive. We recall that, upon several occasions, he chose to be the lesser in any disagreement and asked for forgiveness from an affronted party, always unreservedly and without seeking or proffering excuse. His reconciliatory nature was one of his most endearing and remarkable characteristics.

Tate Mosikare was a loving husband to his wife (known as Manso by friends) and was a dedicated father to the two sons, Lebogang and Kagisho, who he loved very much. One thing in this respect stood out strongly: Tate's absolute and unwavering determination to ensure that his sons receive the best education he could afford. His sons called him "Matado" and were their father's best friends.

Tate Mosikare passed away on 2 May 2017 when he was struck by a vehicle at Sasolburg. His funeral was held at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Vergenoeg – his home congregation in his home town, from where he entered the ministry.

Robala ha monate – rest in peace, Charma-Boy. We will miss you, but only until we meet again at the feet of Jesus, the Lord you love so much.

The Rev Siboniso Bafana Nxumalo (1928-2017)

Reverend Siboniso Bafana Nxumalo was born on 12 December 1928 in Zimbabwe, at Esihlengeni at Battlefields Ranch 50km north-east of Bulawayo. Siboniso was the only child born to Bafana Nxumalo and Siboli Sikhosana. Siboniso's mother was a devoted Presbyterian member and in 1945 Siboniso went to reside with his maternal uncle in Gloag Ranch Mission. He started his standard 3 there in 1946 and was baptized in 1947 and from that time he became immersed into the life and work of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa as it was then called. Being an intelligent young boy, he did all his primary education at Gloag Ranch Mission and was greatly influenced by Rev R. Beattie who made him an interpreter whenever he preached in a mixed congregation despite that there were teachers at the school.

He became a school librarian and other boys used to refer to him as "head teacher". He completed his standard six in 1949 and then went to Kutama College the following year to do his secondary education. He worked as a telephone operator at the Post Office under the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland from 1952 to 1961 in Turk mine.

He became a student for the Ministry and joined Epworth Theological College in 1961. While he was at Epworth for theological training he married Sibusiso Mpala. The two of them were blessed with seven children, four sons and three daughters. At the Theological College he also became a librarian and was noted for his outstanding performance till he finished his studies in December 1963.

He founded study groups at Turk Mine and these were run by the Methodist Church. During weekends he would go to Gloag Ranch Mission to preach and study the Bible with Scripture Union and sometimes he would go as far as David Livingstone Mission to preach. He liked working with schools for the whole of his life.

After finishing his training he was stationed at Ntabazinduna Extension Church. He and Mrs. Nxumalo worked hard to revive that congregation as well as several outstations. In 1988 he also served as the Schools Chaplain of seven UPCS schools while based at Ntabazinduna. He worked as a chaplain tirelessly undergoing very difficult times of the dissident era where part of Gloag High School was burnt down by a notorious dissident called Gwesela in 1987.

He also served as a minister at the the Njube Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. When he was at Njube, he was responsible for several preaching stations such as Tshabalala, now known as Khayelitsha, Robert Sinyoka, Gwatemba, Mnondo, Hawuke and Red-bank, of which some of these now have congregation status. He also stood in as Interim Moderator for congregations such as Makokoba Presbyterian Church. Like the good servant that he was, even after retirement, he also served at the Sigola preaching station.

He was elected as the first African Chairperson of the board of Governors of the Presbyterian Schools in Matabeleland. He was also the first African to be the Presbyterian Educational Fund Board of Trustees Representative. He also served as Moderator of the then Matabeleland Presbytery. Rev. Nxumalo was also a convener in many committees of the church, at one time or another. He played an active role in the formation of the current Presbytery of Zimbabwe. His role in the southern part of the church was huge in that he was the only Presbyterian marriage officer in Matabeleland for a long time. He also became the Chairperson of the Ministers' Fraternity of Bulawayo. Fraternity

All his activities were driven by his overwhelming zeal to do God's work. He was passionate in helping the less privileged, and as such a number of people benefitted from the church bursaries, through him. He always resorted to using personal resources in order to get the work of God moving, whenever there was need.

It has been testified, with much pride, that our minister was such a great servant of God not only in his life and character but also in his commitment to serve the Lord. Many retired and elderly people were motivated and encouraged to hear that Rev Siboniso Bafana Nxumalo even in his eighties was still distributing tracts to people and was preaching in various places.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and the church. We give thanks for his life which glorified God and we are left to enjoy and continue some of the fruits of his hard work.

The Rev Dave Templeton

Dave was born on the 8 January 1943. Dave grew up 'in the denomination', with both his grandfather and father serving as elders and Session Clerks at Wynberg Presbyterian Church. After completing his schooling at Wynberg Boys' High School, Dave was employed in the textile industry. As part of his training he was sent to Huddersfield in the United Kingdom. On a visit to Scotland he met Dot.

After Dave returned to South Africa, Dot followed and they soon married on the 7 December 1968. Dave and Dot have two children; Ross born 15 January 1975, and Tracey born on their anniversary 7 December 1977.

Dave received a call, from the Lord, to serve as minister in the Presbyterian Church and enrolled and completed his Theological Studies at the Bible Institute in Kalk Bay. (Dave would later complete a B.Th. with UNISA). Dave was placed at St. Thomas in Benoni where he completed his Post Academic Training. During his time at St Thomas the small congregation grew numerically, spiritually and financially. It was from St. Thomas' that Dave received a call to serve as the Minister at Stirling Presbyterian Church in the King William's Town Presbytery. (After union with the RPC this Presbytery was named the Presbytery of Amathole.)

Not only did Dave serve the local Church with distinction, he also was active in the wider work of the Denomination serving on various committees, sometimes as the Convener, and served both the Presbytery of King William's Town and later the Presbytery of Amathole as the Moderator of these Presbyteries. Dave involved himself in the Minister's fraternals of the City, and was committed to ecumenism, evidenced by the numbers of ministers from various denominations and Christian movements at his funeral. Dave was respected and held in esteem by his colleagues and peers alike.

Dave served the Stirling congregation for almost 21 years before reaching compulsory retirement age. Dave is remembered with great fondness for his quiet; humble and unassuming demeanour. There is no doubt Dave embodied the spiritual gifts of pastor and teacher. As a Pastor he excelled because of his deep love for Jesus, his compassion and empathy for those he was called to serve. Dave put the needs of others before his own, gave of his time freely and generously as he served the members of Stirling. Nothing seemed too much trouble for Dave as he cared for the 'sheep' of the Stirling pasture.

Dave exercised his Pastoral Ministry under the authority of Scripture; he loved God's Word and acknowledged the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament and enthusiastically embraced them as the supreme standard of faith and life. Dave loved to teach God's word and used it as the index to measure his own life by. Dave loved to pray for people, and many can testify to being anointed with oil as he laid hands on the sick, the hurting and

the bereaved. Dave was quick to pray and had his faith in Jesus who he believed could heal us of all our diseases. But of all the subjects Dave loved to teach on, it was that of the Holy Spirit. He is remembered with fondness for these colourful and informative teachings.

Dave was a devoted family man and adored Dot. This was evidenced by many as he unselfishly served Dot during her time of illness and as she faces her own extreme health challenges. His children Ross and Tracey both wrote moving testimonies of what a wonderful father Dave was to them, he nurtured them in faith and that he reflected his love for Jesus as he loved them. By being the father that he was he showed what the love of the heavenly Father is for his children, was a comment made by Tracey as she said goodbye to her dad.

It was my privilege to say a few words on behalf of the congregation and elders at Dave's funeral. I used a metaphor; (known by us East Londoners as we watch the huge car ships come to load and off load Mercedes vehicles in our port) 'big ships leave big wakes.' Sometimes these wakes are visible long after the ship is no longer visible, and the effect of the ships passing is felt even when it is no longer in sight. I think this is true of Dave's years of faithful ministry the effect is still felt by many.

I ended the tribute with these words from Jeremiah 3¹⁵

Then I will give you Shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

Dave was indeed a Shepherd after God's own heart and we can all agree that:

'...he fought the good fight; he finished the race and he kept the faith.'

I have no doubt Dave was met with these words: 'Well done good and faithful servant yours is the kingdom of heaven.'

Chris Moore

The Rev Greg Van Der Lingen

1/12/1959 -14/12/2016

Greg van der Lingen, son of Ian and Judy and the second of five children wrote of his growing up years: "Before I was 21 I had lived in 4 countries. Born in 1959 in the Mazoe district of the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia, I 'moved' to the Republic of Rhodesia just before I turned six. Living in Kariba for 3½ years was paradise for a young boy – I capsized my first boat, shot my first boomslang, smoked my first cigarette and got my first bloody nose after my first fight over a woman. Not to mention the 'marula beer' we manufactured.

Back to Salisbury where my Junior School career was most memorable for my Boy Scout Gold Arrow and the School Young Farmers Club 1st Prize – for growing geraniums! High School was not particularly noteworthy, except for my last year in which – according to my Mum – I caught up with all the socializing I had missed the previous years.

In 1978, I 'moved' again – to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The following year I did 13 months national service in the Army: back at Kariba and the Zambezi Valley for the most part."

Ian was an active lay preacher in the Presbyterian Church and Greg often accompanied him on his visits to various congregations.

The fifth country was South Africa where Greg went to study economics (for a few weeks) and then journalism at Rhodes University. Greg was active in the production of several student newspapers – most of them for the various Christian Societies on campus. It was during this time that Ian was admitted as a mature age candidate for the ministry and Greg sensed his calling to the ministry. (The van der Lingen family has a long history of ministry in Southern Africa – mostly in the Dutch Reformed Church).

After two years of his journalism degree, Greg was accepted as a student for the ministry and went on to do his BTh, completing his pastoral theology major at the end of 1985. In December that year, Greg married Shona in Alberton, where he served his probation.

Events which stand out during that time were the "Flowers for Soweto" initiative; the beginning of "Koinonia" and an elder's retreat led by Rev Maahe Masango and Elder Siqebengu.

At his ordination Ian preached the charges, and noted that he was now both Greg's father and brother. This bond was always a great encouragement to Greg (and, I believe, also to Ian).

After completing his probation in 1986, Greg accepted a call to Hatfield Presbyterian Church in Harare. In his years at Hatfield, the congregation grew to be truly multi-cultural; a process that was helped along by the

active Boy's and Girl's Brigade there and the evangelism done by Mr Wilbert Sayimani who was later ordained as a Presbyterian minister .

Reconciliation was vital, and one morning Greg's commitment was challenged when he met a person at the Post Office. As they got talking, they discovered that they had been on opposite sides in the same place at the same time during the war. They both courageously made peace and Styx Nyoni became one of the first new members to join Hatfield whilst we were there!

A pre-school was opened, and its teachers were trained at the Mbare Presbyterian Church Training Centre. Fellowship between these two congregations was a special grace during this time, as was the strong leadership offered by the Session.

Greg was often told that he "didn't look like a minister." (Not sure what that meant) and that he was too young to be ordained.

An example of his humour was the day that Greg was visiting one of the older members of the congregation, who had come from an Anglican background. She discussed with Greg how she should address him as her minister, and it was finally agreed that she would call him "Father". Not long after this, one of her friends arrived for tea. On seeing Greg, the friend remarked: "Is this your son?" To which Greg's quick reply was: "No. I'm her Father."

It was also at this time that Greg began his ministry to prisoners, which later led him to be involved in the "Kairos" prison ministry.

Between 1986 and 1992, Greg was active as Clerk in the Presbytery of Harare and Synod of Zimbabwe. Ties were formed and nurtured between the PCUSA and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Greg was also Interim Moderator at Trinity Greencroft, at Chinhoyi and at Highlands.

Greg edited the Presbyterian newsletter/newspaper "Contact" for some years, and enjoyed the relationships that formed as he gathered the news from different people and congregations.

Greg took leave from active ministry for a few years whilst in Zimbabwe, feeling that he needed to hone his communication skills in order to serve the Church better.

In 1992, Greg accepted a call to the Oudtshoorn Presbyterian Church. The culture shock became evident, when Greg who was always an avid gardener, took out the lawnmower one Sunday afternoon!

The years in Oudtshoorn were turbulent times in the history of South Africa. After the shooting of Chris Hani, the ministers' fraternal arranged a prayer service in the stadium. Greg was taken to task by the Session about his participation in this event.

The congregation, in response to a ministry started by one of the elders became active in a ministry to the children who lived in the "kliphuise" of Volmoed. One confirmation class that went to share a day with these children whose homes were without any supply of running water were deeply changed by playing soccer together, and sharing an outdoor shower which was at this elder's home. The girls used the inside bathroom and enjoyed a pamper party like no other! Later, this community was helped to get water rights and piped water to their homes.

Later Greg wrote: "I was privileged to serve in the 1994 elections as Local District Officer for the National Electoral Observer Network (Neon). My "Foreign" counterpart was an Irish Roman Catholic priest. While travelling through the District he casually remarked, "If this was Ireland, as Catholic and Protestant clergy working together, we would probably have been shot by now."

In 1996 Greg was diagnosed with bipolar depression and post traumatic stress disorder, and in 1997 he was boarded. However, Greg's sense of calling never left him. Greg had been Interim Moderator at Thembaletu during his time in Oudtshoorn and was once again called on to perform this task whilst the family lived in George.

Greg's boarding forced him to re-look his calling to the ministry, and re-inforced a conviction that God was more interested in who we are in Christ than in what we can do for the Kingdom.

Whilst living in George, Greg also pursued his interest in communication, and was a reporter with the George Herald for a while. Once Greg's illness was more controlled, Greg began studies in Pastoral Counselling, and worked with FAMSA. Much of his time there was spent de-briefing the staff of the Department of Health who worked caring for people with HIV and AIDS.

In 2008 Greg went as Stated Supply to Jeffrey's Bay, where one of the residents of the Old Age Home told him that he looked like Mr Bean!

When Shona was called to Vryheid, Greg marked for TEEC and helped develop a section of a course on Franciscan Spirituality. He also served as Interim Moderator for BW Zulu congregation and as supervisor for Rev Kim Brown as a Probationer.

Greg was a corresponding member of the doctrine/manual of faith committee. Learning and teaching was a passion of Greg's. He filled in at York High as an English teacher for six months, and was again happily involved with young people and education in 2015, when he taught at St Patrick's College in Kokstad.

One of Greg's most unique and effective ministries began when a family member decided to become Buddhist. Greg, hoping to engage in helpful dialogue, joined a Buddhist chat room on the internet, where he met a few committed and knowledgeable Buddhists, and a large number of people who had become disillusioned with Christianity as they had experienced it. Greg engaged many of these folk in conversation, and was amazed at how often they would acknowledge their need of God when they would message him, asking for prayer in difficult circumstances. When Greg faced his hydrocephalus, increasing disability and operations during 2016, it was the prayers and love of many that sustained Greg and his family.

Greg heeded the advice given him when he and Shona announced their engagement. Prof Cook wrote: "the quality of care you show your wife is the measure of your capability as a pastor. She is your nearest neighbour. It is a lot easier to get a marvellous reputation from more distant neighbours than to earn one in the home."

The quality of care that Greg showed to Shona, to his precious daughters Megan and Tanya (who were born whilst in Harare) and to his extended family was indeed a testimony to God's love and faithfulness.

Oscar Romero wrote:

"This is what we are about: We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities."

We give thanks for the work of God in and through the life of Rev Greg van der Lingen.

The Rev Sidwell Sidima Zimba

The Rev Sidwell Sidima Zimba was born on the 21st August 1943 in Mlungisi Location near Queestown. He is the only son amongst the four daughters of Wilkin and Nomakhephu (*nee* Nonduna) Zimba. He was brought up in a home with strong Christian beliefs and principles.

He obtained his primary and secondary education in Mlungisi Location and obtained his senior certificate at Nkwanca Senior Secondary School. It was during his secondary education where he excelled in poetry and his teachers identified a preacher of the Gospel in him. He loved poems in particular the one titled "Phesheya kwengcwaba" (*beyond the grave*) which had in its stanzas these words: "...kwezo ndlela zasemhlabeni, sasihamba sobabini; ngoku sowusele wedwa; sala Dudu, sala S'thandwa..."

Sidima was the first candidate for the ministry in the Queenstown Congregation (now known as JZS Ncevu Memorial Congregation). He was admitted as a student for the ministry and trained at the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice where he obtained a Diploma in Theology. He was appointed to Stewartville Congregation in Pietersburg, now known as Polokwane in 1968. In 1970, he was called to serve the Glendale Congregation in KwaZulu-Natal. In 1971 he entered into a matrimonial contract with his dear wife, Tlapudi Noluthando (*nee* Maphuta), and were blessed with three children Mbuyiselo, Sizwe and Sebeko, who all had since passed on.

In 1974, he fell ill and was hospitalised ever-since at Komani Hospital until his death on the 15th May 2017. Sidwell is survived by his wife, Noluthando, who for all the years raised their three children, fifteen (15) grandchildren and six (6) great grandchildren alone.

Rest in Peace, Jwarha, Mtika, Mazaleni, Jotelo!

CHANGES IN THE MINISTRY

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

Lekoa

5.2.1 Resignation of Rev N. Kula.

"The Clerk reported to the meeting that Rev Kula's resignation from the charge of ST Timothy was received and accepted by the Executive. Thereafter the charge was declared vacant. The Clerk further reported that he had written an e-mail message to the Presbytery of Amathole transferring the Rev Kula to the discipline and care of that Presbytery now that he is resident within the bounds of that Presbytery. The Presbytery received and confirmed this report. "

Zimbabwe

1. The Rev Evaristo Musedza accepted a call to serve at St Columbus UPCSA and was inducted on 14th January 2017.
2. At a Special Presbytery Meeting that was held on the 28th January 2017 at Trinity UPCSA, Mr Biggie Mususa was licensed and set apart as a Probationer to serve his appointment at Mkoba UPCSA.
3. The Rev Shingi Eunice Masunda was ordained on 4th February 2017 to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. She was appointed to the charge of Warren Park UPCSA on a part time basis for the period of one year.
4. The Rev George Simbanegavi was ordained on 4th February 2017 to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. He was appointed to the charge of Chitemere and Mhondoro UPCSA on a part time basis for the period of one year.
5. The Rev JJJ Ncebetsha was ordained on 4th February 2017 to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. He accepted a call to Highfield UPCSA and was inducted on the same day.
6. The Rev Garikai Gwangwava was ordained on 11th February 2017 to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. He was appointed to the charge of Kubatana and Rhimbick Congregations, as well as Copely and Winsor on a part time basis for the period of 1 year.
7. The Rev Sam Ruzivo was ordained on 18th February 2017 to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. He was appointed to the charge of Sunnyside/Mtoko UPCSA on a part time basis for the period of one year.
8. The Rev Pascal Sibanda was ordained on 4th February 2017 to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. He was appointed to the charge of Khayelitsha and to be the Chaplain of Robert Sinyoka UPCSA.
9. The Rev Garikai Mufanebadza accepted a call to serve in the Presbytery of Western Cape at Oranjemund United Church with effect from 1 January 2017.

MINISTERS EMERITI

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission

The Rev AJ Combrink

The Presbytery notes and approves the application of Rev. Combrink for status of Minister Emeritus and instructs the clerk that this be communicated to Central Office for consideration at Executive Commission 2017.

Proposed, seconded and agreed.

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. SF Chonco the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
2. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. AJ Combrink the status of Minister Emeritus from **28 February 2018** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
3. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. EG Goyns the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 May 2017** (retrospectively) and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds she may reside.
4. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. TH Hans the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
5. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. David Hutt the status of Minister Emeritus from **30 April 2018** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
6. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. SS Mvulana the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
7. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. ST Ndindwa the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 May 2018** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.
8. The Executive Commission grants the Rev. R Weller the status of Minister Emeritus from **31 December 2017** and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds she may reside.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING MINISTERS

Supplementary Report to Executive Commission 2017

The Rev Sibusiso Frans Chonco

The Rev Sibusiso Frans Chonco was born on the 25th December 1947 at KwaMkhizwane Tribal Authority. He is the last born of five children of Mr Enock and Josephine Chonco and baptized at Bantu Presbyterian church of South Africa in Mpolweni mission. He is married to Khanyisile Chonco (Sokhulu) with whom they are blessed with eight children, four boys and 4 girls. Only seven survives as the first born passed away while she was only six months old.

Education

He completed his lower primary at Ingomezulu and higher primary at Mbeka community schools. He did his Matric at Edendale vocational High School. In 2000 he enrolled with Vista University for an Advanced Course and completed it in 2001 under Prof. Nel.

Work Experience

Before responding to God's call he worked for Spin Lon firm at Hammersdale as a Yarn inspector. In 1973 he was appointed by KwaZulu government as an administration clerk at the department of finance in Pietermaritzburg. In 1976 all the offices were moved to Ulundi at Mahlabathini then decided to resign and enrolled with the University of Zululand to do Senior Teachers Diploma. In June same year the University was closed due to Riots, he was then re-employed by department of finance in August 1976 at Ulundi, where he worked until 1984.

Call to the Ministry

While working at Ulundi he became an active member of the Church and received a call to ministry. In his words, "I felt God presence and power of the Holy Spirit in my life. In my prayers it was revealed by the Holy Spirit that God needs me to do his work. I was told that our God is a provider and a protector in everything." The emptiness that was in my heart was replaced by serving in the church. Rev LMS Nkosi played a big role in my life and Rev Khuzwayo who was an Interim moderator at Ulundi.

In 1985 He enrolled with FEDSEM where he obtained his Diploma in Theology. He was licensed on the 20th of December 1987 by Natal Presbytery at Pietermaritzburg congregation.

The Congregations he served

Stuart Memorial

In 1988 he started his ministry at Stuart Memorial in Amathole Presbytery (then Ciskei Presbytery in the former RPCSA) where he did probation and was ordained in March the same year. In spite of many challenges he and his wife visited church members door to door and, "God was with us during the visitations because all visited members came back to the church. The new members also joined the church in numbers. The membership increased from 78 to 146. The mission and church houses that were bought by the Head office were then not occupied by the RPCSA but with the help of the late Rev Kheswa, Rev Chonco was able to get the keys for the church at Bisho. The Ciskei (Amathole) Presbytery and Manyanos were very supportive, they furnished the mission house. It was appreciated. He served this congregation only for a year and a half.

Ulundi Congregation

In 1989 he received and accepted a call from Ulundi Congregation, Natal Presbytery, and was inducted in August 1989. He served Ulundi congregation with success. During his ministry here he established three outstations, i.e, Mtubatuba, Phangode and Mngakwe. He got sites for Main station Ulundi and Mtubatuba outstation. Through the blocks project Rev Chonco managed to build a two room house in order to keep the site at Ulundi. The congregation raised funds and built the church hall and the building was at roof level when Rev Chonco called by Msinga.

Msinga Congregation

In 2004 he received and accepted a call from Msinga Congregation, which is in Uthukela Presbytery. During his time there he managed to encourage the Congregation to build church halls, as most are worshipping in old mud buildings. Msinga is a big congregation with 14 outstations. He devised a method with intention to develop and divide it to a workable size. Due to its status, very rural with elderly and many unemployed members, he has not reached his goal of seeing Msinga growing to the level he was aiming for.

Positions

At the inception of the Northern Natal Presbytery, of the former RPCSA, in 1994 he became the first Moderator. The position he held until 1997

He also served as the President of the MCG at Presbytery level. He was once awarded a presidential award by MCG Denominational.

Though Umsinga is a congregation with many outstations, due to shortage of ministers in the Church, Rev Chonco has been a willing servant who assisted whenever asked. He served the following congregations as the interim moderator; **Gordon Memorial, Jokweni and Douglas**, all within Uthukela Presbytery

Conclusion

Rev. Chonco is a man of God who has had an unbroken service of thirty (30) years in the active ministry. He had his good and bad times but through it all he trusted His Lord. The Presbytery on behalf of General Assembly appreciates his dedication service to the Lord as he bows out of the active ministry on his retirement. The church's appreciation also goes to his wife Khanyisile and children who gave support as they journeyed with him over 32 years.

The Presbytery and General Assembly wishes Rev Chonco and his wife all the best as they retire from active ministry on the 31 December 2017.

The Rev Thamsanqa Howard Ernest Hans

Early Age

Born on 28 June 1949 in Port Elizabeth. The first born child of the late Frank Laduma America Belu and the late Rosie Nomchafu Maliza. Was raised by his grandmother Ninise Joja in Adelaide.

Marital Status

He is married to Bukelwa Hans (nee Mbulawa) who is a source of blessing to his ministry, a help mate indeed. They are blessed with five children Mandlenkosi, Sbhongile, Xolisani, Vuyolwethu and Bongani.

Academic

He passed standard six at Davidson Memorial School in Adelaide with first class. He proceeded to Newell High School, passing his junior certificate with first class and obtained a Joint Matriculation Board Certificate in 1971. In 1972 he registered towards a Bachelor of Arts degree with Theological options in the University of Fort Hare. Due to his political activities he was expelled in 1973.

He candidated for Ministry under the late Dr GB Molefe. From 1978-1980 he was trained as a Minister of religion and obtained his Diploma in Theology at the Federal Theological Seminary in Pietermaritzburg.

Between 1984-1986 he studied in the United States of America and obtained a Masters Degree in Christian Education from Presbyterian Graduate School of Education in Richmond, Virginia, USA.

Ministerial Career

Thami Howard Hans was ordained in 1981 into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament as a minister of the then Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. He accepted an appointment at St James Presbyterian Congregation in Zwijve in 1981 where he ministered until 1990.

He was appointed as a Minister of Motherwell Presbyterian Congregation later renamed as St Matthews Congregation in 1998(which was an outstation of St James). In the mid-1980s he served as an Interim Moderator of St Andrews Presbyterian Church, in Somerset East. After the retirement of the late Rev De Villiers Soga in 2002, he was appointed Interim Moderator of JY Hliso Memorial Congregation, later Interim Moderator of Uitenhage Congregation later renamed GT Mcotheli Memorial Congregation and Glen Avon Congregation, Somerset East.

In 1999 he was involved as a member of the organising committee for the union of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in South Africa and Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa.

Leadership

The Rev THE Hans served in various committees and structures of the Denomination

- He was elected as Convener of General Assembly Youth, served in the Petition, Overtures Committee of General Assembly, served in the Ministry Committee, Convener of Nominations Committee and Convener of the Stewardship Committee
- He was elected as President of both the then Presbytery and national Presbyterian Men's Association.
- He was elected as President of the then Port Elizabeth, King Williamstown and Cape Town Youth Association (PEKINGCA)
- He was elected as President of the then Port Elizabeth, King Williamstown and Cape Town Men's Association (PEKINGCA)

- He was elected as President of the then Presbyterian Black leadership Consultation (PBLC). Under his leadership he has produced two ministers, the Revds. David Bonisile Mdyesha, who is currently ministering at Gugulethu Presbyterian Congregation, Dr Bukelwa Hans and Rev Thembinkosi Nopapaza
- He served as the Denominational Vice President of the Men's Christian Guild and the President of the Denominational Men's Christian Guild of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.
- He served as Moderator of the Central Cape Presbytery from 2006 to 2008
- He served in various capacities of Local Government since 1990 and has been Director of Security Services in the Nelson Mandela Metro until his retirement.

Community Involvement

- He was elected to serve as a member of the Livingstone, Port Elizabeth Provincial and Dora Ngiza Hospitals Boards
- Between the years 1996 to 2002 which were the period of Taxi Violence, he served as mediator. Because of his success in bringing peace in the Taxi Industry of the Metro he was asked to serve in the Provincial Taxi Task Team, a structure that was formed by the Provincial Government to address all taxi violence issues in the Province
- Between the years 1986 to 1990 he was appointed to serve as a facilitator and mediator for the unification of sporting codes in Port Elizabeth
- He was appointed to serve as a Director of Sisonke Community Centre in Zwide from 1981 to 1990.
- He is the founder member and First Chairperson of Ekuphumleni Old Age Home in Zwide which was the first and only black registered home for blacks in the Province. Together with Mrs Majola, Mr Ntlabeza, Mrs Sheilla Ntshona and Ms Somyalo initiated and negotiated with the then Provincial Administration for the improvement and better payment system of pensioners for the aged at various pay points.
- He was involved in the various political activities during the 1980s as Sisonke community Centre was the hub of activities during those difficult years.

Ministry

Rev THE Hans loves, teaching ministry namely: Preaching, Leadership Development and Teaching Confirmation Class.

The Rev David Andrew Hutt

Background

David Andrew Hutt was born on 4 April 1950 in Johannesburg. He was baptised on 1 October 1950, and confirmed 1970 at St John's Presbyterian Church, Johannesburg. Ordained as Elder at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Germiston.

He is married to Val and they have been blessed with two sons.

David Started working in the Johannesburg City Council as a student, in 1972 he worked as a health inspector, later senior health inspector, divisional health inspector. In 1986 moved into the City Engineers Dept Solid Waste as deputy director, in 1996 promoted to Executive Officer Solid Waste (Metro) November 1998 medically boarded.

Education

He Matriculated 1967 Northview High School, Johannesburg. In 1971 he obtained Nat. Dip for Health Inspectors (WITS TECH); 1976 Nat. Cert Health Education (WITS TECH). In 1984 B A Public Admin (UNISA); 1986 B A Hons Public Admin (UNISA); 1995 Advanced Cert Business management *Cum Laude* (RAU), 1998 BTH (UNISA)

Ministry

David was ordained as a minister of the Word and Sacrament at St Ninian Presbyterian Church on 25 January 2001.

When asked about his journey in the ministry, David had the following to say:

"I need to place myself open for God to use me where ever He will. Where He leads I shall follow, having the understanding that God loves the sinner and the sin-sick, to whom He has called me to bring and share His grace.

I have always enjoyed the joy of the Word and the grace that God freely gives to those who believe. Particularly the understanding of history which has been helpful in the ministry as this makes sense of the brokenness and hurting found in our society today. It is from this focus that healing and reconciliation takes

place, especially within the congregations and ministers that have been hurt and often abused. To be able to preach the Gospel in faith is a special gift, which brings people to that place of repentance and forgiveness. Teaching must be biblically based and founded upon a sound knowledge of the doctrines of the church. A strong recognition of the New Covenant is especially important so that the ministry is focused on following Jesus rather than the dictates of others.

It is in and through pastoral visitation that the congregation is nurtured, and by reaching into their homes it is possible to reach into their hearts with the love of Jesus.

Having conducted missions in many areas it is always amazing how faithful God is, when we preach the Gospel, signs and wonders follow, people are healed of sickness, families restored, spiritually blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk. It is important to equip and train the congregation, to build up their faith and encourage them to persevere in and through Jesus Christ and in so doing making then disciples. I am not ashamed of Jesus Christ whom I dearly love, and I un-ashamedly preach to bring Him glory. A dedicated prayer life is part of who I am wherein I share with the Holy Spirit dwelling in me. So as I wait on the Lord, I trust.

My personal strengths include getting the job done, caring for the hurting, sound biblical and doctrinal knowledge. I am loyal with a high sense of integrity. I have good interpersonal skills and the ability to express myself vocally and in writing. I enjoy preaching and I love to teach. I often evangelise in public places.

My two sons and wife are important to me, and so helping them is part of who I am.

I know many parts of the pain and suffering of life, illness in the home, conflict through drugs, sexuality and alcohol. Broken promises and betrayal, lies and deceit and the general life that most of us face day-to-day; yet despite this I have become an over comer, a person filled with love, joy and peace, bringing hope to those on the path of life”.

Currently David is Seconded from the UPCS as the Spiritual Director of the Christ Healing Fellowship, where he oversee the operations and financial control of the Fellowship. This includes undertaking missions, evangelism and outreach to various congregations throughout South Africa, preaching and teaching in regard to the healing ministry of the Church. He is also appointed by the Presbytery of Egoli as the Minister of Strubensvalley United Church at 885 Florin Road, Wilgeheuwel; Roodepoort.

Sporting achievements

Achieved First Dan (Black Belt) Judo, Club Coach and Provincial Referee.
Completed six Comrades Marathons

Military

Completed National Service 1968, basic training IV South African Infantry Battalion Middelburg Transvaal, Posted to First Battalion Transvaal Scottish, completed officer course Platoon Commander, transferred to Medics, served three active duty Border Camps SWA as health officer, on Reserve of Officers 1980. **Medals:** Pro Patria and John Chard

Publications

Written and published the *‘Pastors guide to HIV in South Africa’*
Publish a daily devotional via internet *‘Be encouraged’* to 250 people on a daily basis since 2006.
Near completion for publication a *‘Guide to the Healing Ministry’*

Conclusion

Friends and colleagues have always enjoyed David’s love and kindness and so they join together in wishing him well in retirement!

The Rev Sikhumbuzo Sydney Mvulana

Call to the ministry

My call to the ministry was sparked off by a tragic incident that I stumble upon as I got off a train in Leralla Station NEAR Thembisa Johannesburg in June 1976. I had a shock of my life when I saw more than twenty (20) dead bodies lying near the station. They were victims of a strike conflict that was fuelled by the liberation struggle that was in full force in the whole country at that time. On that particular day, the whole location of Tembisa was literally in flames. I was deeply shaken spiritually by the sight of this manslaughter. As a Christian the incident really touched me profoundly and I would break into tears each time I prayed about it.

At the time I was a member in full communion in the Rockville parish of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa where Rev. B. Molaba was a minister. Later I left and joined Rockville for Germiston congregation whose Minister was the Rev. B.D. Yanta. In 1978 Rev Yanta proposed that I join ministry. I did not feel inclined to consider such a pre-position at the time. However the following year I went to talk to the Rev. R.T. Mzimba who succeeded in motivating me to accept a calling to the ministry. I actually found it touching and interesting that both Rev Yanta and Rev Mzimba saw me as their candidate for ministry and each furnished a testimonial to the seminary for me. In 1979 I was admitted as a candidate for the Ministry of The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa then later sent to FEDSEM to train at the level of a Certificate in Theology for three years, that was in 1980.

Years in Cunningham

The 1982 General Assembly decided to appoint me to the Cunningham Congregation in the Presbytery of Transkei. Rev. Ngobese who was our Warden at FEDSEM broke the news of my appointment in Cunningham. The Congregation never had a black Minister, they had been served by missionaries from Scotland and were not ready for a change. Rev. Ngobese was not happy about my appointment in that Congregation. He asked if I did not have a problem with it and I responded telling him that not only was I unhappy about the appointment but I was not going to obey the Assembly's instruction to go to Cunningham.

While at home for December vacation, I informed my mother about the appointment and my resistance to go to Cunningham and she said, "It is all up to you my son". I left her and went to pray at my usual place outside home premises and asked for God's hand in this difficult challenge. God's response was a clear command that I go to Cunningham Congregation. After God's response to me, I experienced a sense of relief and readiness to go to Cunningham.

Licensing

My licensing service took place at my home Congregation (Tsekong) on the 7th of January 1983 and on the 15th was introduced to Cunningham Congregation on probation. I was ordained by the Presbytery of Transkei on the 17th day of April 1983. In January 1984 I accepted a call from Cunningham Congregation to become their first black Minister stepping in the shoes of the Rev. Kincaid who was a missionary from Scotland.

I worked extremely hard at Cunningham, partly for the purpose of convincing them that a black Minister can also perform outstandingly. One of the first challenges that I experienced was the Congregation MCG's resistance to wear the association's white blazer. However with God's help I succeeded in convincing them to comply and wear proper uniform. Immediately after, I was elected as the MCG President of the denomination nationally.

In 1985 I enrolled with TEE College to further my studies but due to stressful challenges at Cunningham Congregation as well as financial constraints I was unable to that dream. However I am happy to mention that despite of all those challenges I succeeded to set up two extra outstations at Cunningham and rendered services for fourteen (14) years.

Participation in Presbytery Life

Harmonious relationship in the Presbytery of Transkei made my fourteen years stay at Cunningham an enjoyable time. Because of the support we gave each other as Ministers, work was not that much strenuous despite the fact that we were very much understaffed during those years. I remember at one stage there was a dire of ministers in the Presbytery that I found myself serving three (3) congregations as an interim moderator namely Ndakana, Govan and Malan. In the midst of all I also had a responsibility of serving as the clerk for two terms (1984-1985) and 1989-1990 during the second term I was also serving on the Business Committee of Assembly.

Rietvlei Parish: My Last Station

In 1997 I accepted a call to the Rietvlei Congregation in my home Presbytery of East Griqualand. It is where I experienced some challenges which I regard as the most distressful in my entire life of Ministry. A serious conflict fuelled by unfounded allegations against me as the minister, culminated in a violent incident of the locking of the sanctuary during a Good Friday- Easter weekend by a rebellious group of congregants. The Minister and the congregation at large were taken to court in 2008. This is now a history in Rietvlei Congregation. I have laboured in this congregation as well as in the East Griqualand Presbytery for twenty (20) years despite these trying experiences. I am pleased with God for being with me throughout this journey until the church release me from service to retire. I thank God for his kindness to me, for the spiritual gift with which He armed me with. I also thank him for having enabled me to organise the erection of a sanctuary in the Jerusalem outstation of Rietvlei Congregation. I am proud to mention that I am now leaving Rietvlei Congregation happily and it is now.



NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS

1. INTRODUCTION

We give God the glory for giving us this opportunity to serve Him and His Church in this committee. It has been a very enriching and learning experience for most of us who have been appointed to this committee for the first time. Thank you for trusting us with such a responsibility. With the presence of the Clerk, the General Secretary and the Moderator we know we will not walk in strange waters.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The following serves as members of the committee:

Revs, Dr. CN. M'kandawire (Convener), Patricia Phiri, J. Manda, V. Mkhungo (Clerk of Assembly), Col. SW. Mwaekwa, Mr. W. Moyo. The committee has exhibited an exception team spirit throughout its meetings and when given any assignment. They have made themselves available to all the meetings despite all their other commitments.

During our first meeting it was realized that Assembly Business Committee appointed by the 2016 Assembly is not gender sensitive, there is a need for the co-option of Women and Youth. To this effect we wish to co-opt two youths in the name of Mr. Weziimba and Mr. Felix Thindwa. For women we co-opt the names of Mrs. Mwiche Simpson and Ms. Catherine Musole Kaseketi.

We are continuously inspired by our able General Secretary Rev. Lungile Mpetsheni who has been there for us. His wisdom and experience has been of great benefit the committee.

In our meetings and in the planning phase of the EXCO we have also enjoyed the presence of the Moderator the Rt. Rev. Dr. R. Munthali who has continue to inspire us through devotions moving us to be a Spirit led church. We thank God for the support that we have continue receiving from the finance committee and its staff through the (CFO) Mr. Jeff Jooste.

3. SUPPORT TO THE HOSTING PRESBYTERY

It is one of our obligations to support the Presbytery that is hosting the EXCO and General Assembly; by our physical presence and through communication. To that effect the Convener, The Assembly Clerk and the Moderator of General Assembly have been part of the Local Organizing Committee during some of it's strategic meetings.

4. DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

The 12th General Assembly of 2016 held within the bound of Amathole Presbytery decided that Orientation shall take place at the Presbyteries and not at the Assembly any more. The Committee propose that Presbyteries should run at least one of their meetings in a **Consensus decision making model**, so as to familiarise their members with the operations of the General Assembly.

Just as a way of reminder that we are still using the Consensus Model in our decision making. This process has three **sessions**. The first is the **Listening session**, then followed by the **Insaka group session**, then finally the **decision making session**. All the three phases of this process are of vital importance and we would encourage all commissioners to take this process prayerfully and seriously because the decisions that we make impact the whole denomination at the end of the day.

5. TRANSLATION EQUIPMENT

The issue of translation during General Assembly and Exco. is a matter bordering on the issue of inclusion and exclusion. We believe the process of decision making is one that must be exercised by all regardless of ones' mother tongue or level of education. The buying of translating equipment is therefore of vital importance. Unfortunately this goal, as decided by General Assembly is proving to be unachievable for a number of reasons; namely, the trial at 2014 Assembly, language preferences, financial implications, cabling etc. We are still pursuing the matter though so far we have not find any joy. We hope to bring the final report on this matter at the next General Assembly.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

When the Committee took a look at the terms of reference that where circulated to all committee conveners it was discovered that the Business Committee did not have clear terms of reference. It was the feeling of everyone that for them to deliver they needed to know their terms of Reference. At it's meeting the following terms of reference were agreed upon and were sent to the Priorities and Resources as the committee responsible for compiling terms of references for all Assembly Committees:

- a) To organise meetings of the General Assembly and EXCO.
- b) To draw up the agendas of the General Assembly and EXCO.
- c) Formulation of Standing Orders for both General Assembly and EXCO.
- d) Taking responsibility for the conducting of the business of General Assembly and EXCO.
- e) Ensure implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly and EXCO
- f) Attending to matters that may arise in-between General Assembly and EXCO.
- g) Ensure the preservation of the UPCS organizational memory (repository) as drawn from the decisions of the General Assembly and EXCO.

7. AGENDA FOR EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

The preliminary Draft agenda has been sent to all Conveners with the EXCO. Papers calling for inputs. What is tabled before the 2017 Executive Commission as the Final Draft Agenda includes therefore all inputs that have been received from Assembly Committee Conveners.

Commissioners should note that in putting together the agenda for each Council, the ABC also takes into account the "Topical Issues" that appear to be subjects of debate within the Denomination; Christian Community or in the Countries where our membership is found; as well as events worth celebrating or remembering: opportunity is created through the Agenda of the Council for the UPCS family to express her views on such issues or celebrate such memorable events.

The same approach has been taken into consideration by the ABC in crafting the 2017 Executive Commission Agenda, hence the inclusion of the 500th Anniversary Celebration of the Reformation. To make this meaningful you will realize that each day of our meeting has been given a theme taken from the "Solas" of the Reform emphasis.

8. STANDING ORDERS

The Standing Orders for the 2017 Executive Commission have been developed by the ABC and are now brought to the Executive Commission for adoption to guide the ordering of it's business. These were sent earlier with the 2017 EXCO papers.

9. EVALUATION FORM FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

Learning is an ongoing process of life. Each process we apply in life has it's strength and weakness and has the potential of improving or becoming worse. Hence the need for evaluation. This has become a standard procedure of our council meetings. Evaluation forms have been distributed with the registration materials and we will appreciate it if you take sometime to fill in the form and leave it with us before the end of the Executive Commission. This will help us as we plan for our future council meetings.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Assembly Business Committee and Priority & Resource Committee were assigned with the task of monitoring and evaluation of the Strategic Plan. To this end, the Conveners of the two Committees already established the ground to work with the Auditing Committee and the first meeting has since been held at eMseni Centre. Some work is being done in this regard and soon some evaluation forms shall be circulated to all committees of Assembly. Our plea to all committee is for co-operation.

11. General Assembly 2018

Highveld Presbytery has conditionally agreed to host 2018 General Assembly. The General Secretary and Clerk are working with the Presbytery and a local organizing committee has since been appointed. We shall continue to offer them the support that is needed.

12. FACILITATION TEAM

We present to you these men and women of the church who have agreed to be part of the Facilitation team that ensures that the UPCS moves towards a "**Spirit Driven Church**."

"The **General Secretary**; assisted by the **Clerk of Assembly** supervises the work of the Drafting Team; whilst the General Secretary will be responsible for the final product of Drafting Team that gets presented to General Assembly during the Decision Making Session." Extracted from the 2016 Standing Orders.

I encourage you to receive them and cooperate with them as the willing vessels the Lord has given unto us.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Drafting team | Rev. Sipho Ncapayi, Rev. D. Mushayavanhu , Nigel Nyamutumbu and Vuyani Maguga |
| 2. Minute Clerks | Rev Zwai Mtyobile, Rev Lydia Neshangwe, Col. Stephen Mwaekwa |
| 3. Records | Miss E. White, Rev. Patricia Phiri, |
| 4. Scrutineer for the minutes | Rev. Jacob Manda, Rev Matemba Tati |
| 5. Media | Lazarus Sajeni, Watson Moyo, Nigel Nyamutumbu |
| 6. Vote of thanks to the Moderator | Mr. G. Mbandazayo |
| 7. Vote of thanks to Hosting Presbytery | Rev Patricia Phiri |

REV. DR. CHRISTOPHER MKANDAWIRE
CONVENER

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receive the report.
2. The Executive Commission gives the ABC the powers to co-opt the four additional members to take care of the gender imbalance and the youth representation on the committee.

3. The Executive Commission instruct all commissioners to attend to all the three sessions of the decision making process.
4. The Executive Commission to instruct all commissioners fill in the evaluation forms by the end of the EXCO.
5. The Executive Commission notes that the investigation to purchase our own Translation Equipment is still on going.
6. The Executive Commission notes that the teams of reference formulated by the ABC have been referred to Priorities and Resources Committee awaiting their approval.
7. The Executive Commission adopts the proposed Draft Agenda as the final Agenda for the 2017 Executive Commission.
8. The Executive Commission adopt the standing orders for the 2017 Executive Commission as contained in the papers to be the guide for ordering of its business.
9. The Executive Commission appoints the following as facilitation Team:
 - 9.1 Drafting team: Rev. Sipho Ncapayi, Rev. D. Mushayavanhu , Nigel Nyamutumbu, Vuyani Maguga .
 - 9.2 Minute Clerks: Rev Zwai Mtyobile, Rev Lydia Neshangwe, Col. Stephen Mwaekwa.
 - 9.3 Records: Miss E. White, Rev. Patricia Phiri.
 - 9.4 Scrutineer for the minutes: Rev. Jacob Manda, Rev. Matemba.
 - 9.5 Media: Lazarus Sajeni, Watson Moyo, Nigel Nyamutumbu.
 - 9.6 Vote of thanks to the Moderator : Mr. G Mbandazayo.
 - 9.7 Vote of thanks to Hosting Presbytery :Rev. Patricia Phiri.

CLERK OF ASSEMBLY

Supplementary Report to Executive Commission 2017

Introduction

Once again, I would like to extend my sincere thanks for affording me the privileged of serving the UPCSA through this office.

This report will cover the following:

1. Committee Reports.
2. Information from Presbyteries.
3. Changes to the format of Papers to General Assembly/Executive Commission.
4. General Assembly 2018
5. Management of Tiyo Soga House.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Various decisions dealing with timeous submission of reports have passed at previous Executive Commission and General Assemblies there are still a number of Committees that submit their reports very late. This complicate matters as it very difficult to meet the deadlines.

Our Standing Orders states:

- 3.6. *The report submitted after the prescribed date will NOT be printed in the Executive Papers or in Supplementary Papers. Instead the Clerk will report the matter to the Executive Council and the decision to listen to the report will be taken by EXCO. Should EXCO resolve to listen to the late report; the Convener of the affected Committee will then make copies for ALL commissioners.*
- 3.7. *No report will be considered as Supplementary unless provisions of the Supplementary report have been complied with; i.e. an initial report has been submitted at an appropriate time and between the time of submission and 14 days between the Council meeting there have been some developments within the work of the Committee that warrant reporting to the Council. The report of the Assembly Business Committee is exempted from this rule*

INFORMATION FROM PRESBYTERIES

As with the reports from Committee Conveners, many of the required information from Presbyteries was received way after the due date and a number of these were incomplete. This, after a successful consultation with Presbytery Clerks, there has been no improvement. This does not only frustrate the office of the Clerk of Assembly but also affects the Local Organising Committee and those involved with logistics as we do not even receive of Commissioners until well after the due date.

CHANGES TO THE FORMAT OF PAPERS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY/EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

The UPCSA is currently enjoying good relationship with the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa (LECSA). This Church runs a huge Printing Press. At their proposal, we got into a deal that they will help us do most of our printing work with them. We have therefore asked them to print our papers for this Executive Commission with them. We hope that this will bring about good quality papers which we can be proud of. We also hope that this will cut down on the printing expenses. It would be important that we get comments for the membership of the denomination, particularly those related to any improvement.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2018

The Presbytery of Highveld has been approached to host the General Assembly 2018 within their bounds and they have agreed. Local Organising Committee is already in place and the venue has been identified.

MANAGEMENT OF TIYO SOGA HOUSE

The age and condition of the Tiyo Soga House remains a concern especially regarding high cost of maintenance. The money that spent on replacing and fixing the building is worryingly high.

THE REV WV MKHUNGO
CLERK OF ASSEMBLY

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

2. The Executive Commission endorses the process for the submission of the reports as contained in the Standing Orders.
3. The Executive Commission instructs Presbytery Clerks to submit relevant Presbytery reports timeously to all General Assemblies and Executive Commissions.
4. The Executive Commission resolves that all future papers of General Assembly and Executive Commission be printed by the LECSA Printers.
5. The Executive Commission resolves that, the dates for General Assembly 2018 be set as Saturday 7 July 2018 until Friday 13 July 2018.
6. The Executive Commission resolves that General Assembly 2018 be held within the bounds of the Presbytery of Highveld.
7. The Executive Commission notes the challenges concerning the Tiyo Soga House.

GENERAL SECRETARY

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this report is to close the gaps that were left open in the main report, as some work was still in progress.

MEDIATION SEMINAR

2. Thirteen Presbyteries responded to the call to submit the names for the people that would be trained and placed in the pool of potential mediators in times of conflict in any Presbyteries. The Mediation Seminar was held at Lumko Institute, Benoni on 10-11 May 2017 and was attended by the representatives from eleven (11) Presbyteries, and the other two apologised for not attending. The seminar was successful. A summary of the outcome of the seminar that was prepared by the participants is attached. It is requested that the UPCSA buttresses the idea of mediation before the formal legal process, as mediation has a potential to build relationships and maintain the peace of the church. The Executive Commission should encourage the Presbyteries and Congregations to give mediation a chance.

SEMPLE MEMORIAL CONGREGATION (AMATHOLE PRESBYTERY)

3. As the developments regarding the correspondence between the lawyers and the General Secretary evolved, the matter was communicated with the office of the Moderator who headed the Commission to the Presbytery of Amathole. After due consideration, the Moderator's Commission decided to withdraw the contentious letter, so that the matter could be pursued within the UPCSA. The lawyers were advised as such and there was no further correspondence therefrom. The matter is now in the hands of the Moderator's Commission whose report will be tabled at the Executive Commission.

THE SEVEN MINISTRIES

4. A great number of events that have taken place in our societies necessitates the reinforcement for the call to pay particular attention to these ministries. Incidents that include rape, abuse and the senseless killing of women and children, mostly by men need to be addressed. Men need to be ministered to and to be involved in the ministry, so as to address the problems that lead to them committing these and related acts of crime. Through guided ministry, men could be equipped to be involved in reducing the deaths of many boys/young men during circumcision. All the groups need specialised attention for a balanced society and, invariably, the church.

5. The major concern is the **Welfare and Development of Ministers, including the Retired Ministers, (and ministers' families)**. Without citing any incidents, one continues to witness the pathetic conditions in which some ministers, especially the black ministers have to do ministry and the emoluments that they receive and/or not receive after doing so much work. The UPCSA has to value the ministers as its **most valuable assets**. Their welfare cannot be ignored beyond what has happened already. A concerted effort is needed to redress the wrongs and injustices that have taken place on our watch. The Executive Commission should instruct the Presbyteries to take administrative and pastoral responsibility for the welfare of the ministers and their families. The emoluments, pension and housing issues should be prioritised. It is suggested that the year 2018 should be devoted to the promotion of the profile of a UPCSA minister. This should be done to affirm and emphasise the uniqueness of the role of a minister in a congregation. All the ministers and the structures of the church should be implored to observe this. **But the Ministry Committee should be requested to work out a plan on how to offer support to and encourage the development of ministers after ordination.**

ISRAEL/PALESTINE ENVIRONMENT

6. The events around the Israel/Palestine issue call upon the church to engage in a critical reflection and speak against the injustices on humanity and creation. This matter is permanently in the agendas of the ecumenical bodies that the UPCSA is affiliated to. The UPCSA should also place this issue in its agenda until a long lasting solution is found. It is therefore recommended that the Church and Society should attend to this aspect and guide the UPCSA on the dynamics and the direction the Church may take.

GENERAL SECRETARY

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that
 - a. the Mediation Seminar was conducted; and

- b. the pool of 11 trained mediators has been established.
3. The Executive Commission encourages the Councils of the UPCS to
 - a. give mediation a chance before resorting to formal legal processes; and
 - b. build mediation resources at congregational and Presbytery levels.
4. The Executive Commission encourages the Congregations and Presbyteries to pay attention to and pursue the seven ministries as a contribution towards a balanced and peaceful society.
5. The Executive Commission
 - a. expresses its concern about the deplorable circumstances in which some of our ministers, especially the black ministers do their work;
 - b. encourages the Presbyteries to enhance their pastor parsonum role;
 - c. requests the Ministry Committee to work out a plan on how to offer support to and encourages the development of ministers after ordination; and
 - d. agrees to dedicate the year 2018 to the promotion of the profile of a UPCS minister.
6. The Executive Commission instructs the Church and Society to guide the UPCS on the dynamics and the direction the Church may take on the Israel/Palestine issue.

APPENDIX 1

OUTCOME OF THE UPCS MEDIATION SEMINAR HELD AT LUMKO INSTITUTE ON 10-11 MAY 2017

MEDIATION

What brought us to this point?

- Legal system a bit problematic.
- Mediated process would be helpful
- "Presbyterianism is an Institutionalised form of mistrust".
- Court of Assembly is very expensive
- We have a series of parallel legal committees
- Courts of Assembly cost 2% of the church income last year
- Mediation needs to be facilitated by a person/people duly authorised by the UPCS.
- Mediation begins with simple exploration of each party sees the problem(Including opportunity to seek clarity on issues raised)
- The Facilitator then enlists both parties in a process that seeks to find an amicable solution.
- If a solution is found, this is put in writing and signed by both parties. A copy of this is then filed with the Clerk of Assembly.

Scanning the UPCS

- Differentiate between mediation and the legal system
- If there is an unwillingness for the two parties to sit down, then the legal system must be employed. This system will compel them to sit.
- Check the willingness to mediate
- Assure parties that if mediation does not work, they have the right to the legal system.
- Parties have a right to choose mediators
- Designated members of the Mediation Team should not be members of APR
- Mechanism of Mediation
- If the parties speak a different language than English, there has to be a paid interpreter.
- Leadership in the church need to take their responsibilities

Questions on the way forward

1. Flowchart the mediation process from beginning to end

- Mediation has to be placed as the first step in a conflict
- Mediation process starts at Presbytery level
- The clerk of Session or minister will take the matter
- In case the clerk and minister are parties in conflict, a third party should report
- The GS office to be the logical office to house mediation

2. How best do we effectively use or deploy mediators?

- Putting a Team of two mediators for effective work per mediation
- Members will be placed in Presbyteries that aren't 'theirs.'
- Encourage Mediators to read further on the matter
- Training of more mediators to avoid burn out of present mediators
- Offer conflicting parties 3 names from which to choose two
- Moderator of Presbytery to be champion of the mediation process before referring the matter for mediation
- The Clerk of Presbytery will then inform the GS office

3. How can we get the mediation process supported in the UPCA?

- Market it positively at both Presbyteries and Congregations
- Training on mediation for our youth in conflict resolution even in
- Get student ministry candidates trained in conflict resolution
- Included in the Elder Training Manual
- Put Mediation on the Mission and Discipleship website
- Slogan: Mediate First for better Peace Making
- Encourage Presbyteries to put this slogan as part of their standing orders.

THE SEDIBENG TRUST
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
31 December 2016

GENERAL INFORMATION

Trustees

KV Baloyi
EA Germiquet
RD Johnson
N Kgwale
LM Mosotho
ME Ramulondi
EG Stopforth

Registered office

21-9th Street West
Menlo Park
Pretoria

Place of business

Pretoria

Nature of business

Church Trust

Bankers

Standard Bank of South Africa

Accounting officer

J.Bhika

THE SEDIBENG TRUST
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 31 December 2016

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General information	1
Approval of annual financial statements	2
Report of the accounting officer	3
Annual financial statements	
Statement of Financial Position	4
Statement of Comprehensive income	5
Statement of Changes in Net Investment	6
Cash flow statement	7
Notes	8

APPROVAL OF ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Trustees of the Trust are responsible for the preparation of the annual financial statements of The Sedibeng Trust, and to ensure that appropriate accounting policies have been applied in the preparation thereof. The trustees of the trust confirm that as at 31 December 2016, the assets of the corporation exceeds its liabilities.

The annual financial statements have been approved by all trustees or by trustees holding at least 51% interest and are signed on their behalf by two of the following trustees:-

KV Baloyi
EA Germiquet
RD Johnson
N Kgwale
LM Mosotho
ME Ramulondi
EG Stopforth

Date: 09/02/2017



REPORT OF THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER

I have performed the duties of Accounting Officer to The Sedibeng Trust, in accordance with South African Statements of Generally Accepted Accounting Policies for small to medium size Entities. No audit was conducted. Accordingly I do not imply or express an opinion or any other form of assurance on the annual financial statements.

Compilation engagement

In addition to my duties as accounting officer and on the basis of information provided by the members, I have compiled, in accordance with the International Standards on Related Services (ISRS4410) applicable to compilation engagements, the financial statements set out on pages 1 to 7 for the year ended 31 December 2016. These financial statements comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2016, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in funds and cash flow statement for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes. The trustees are responsible for these financial statements.

Duties of accounting officer

I have determined that the annual financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records, summarised in the manner required by the Act, and have done so by adopting such procedures, and conducting such enquiries in relation to the accounting records, as I considered necessary in the circumstances. I have also reviewed the accounting policies that the Trustees requested to be applied in the preparation of the annual financial statements, and I consider that they are appropriate to the business.

Date: 2017/02/09



THE SEDIBENG TRUST
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION – 31 December 2016

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2	1 802 907	1 753 905
Investments	3	<u>5 882 567</u>	<u>5 637 075</u>
Total non-current assets		R <u>7 685 475</u>	R <u>7 390 980</u>
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	4	531 581	545 603
Cash and cash equivalents	5	<u>397,138</u>	<u>780 486</u>
Total current assets		R <u>928,719</u>	R <u>1 326 089</u>
Total assets		R <u>8,614,194</u>	R <u>8 717 069</u>
FUNDS AND LIABILITIES			
Capital and reserves			
Trust Capital	6	6,116,860	6 279 862
Reserves	7	<u>2,478,685</u>	<u>2 396 192</u>
Total capital and reserves		R <u>8,595,545</u>	R <u>8 676 054</u>
Current liabilities			
Trade and other Payables	8	18 650	23 516
Total current liabilities		R <u>18 650</u>	R <u>23 516</u>
Total liabilities		R <u>18 650</u>	R <u>23 516</u>
Total members' funds and liabilities		R <u>8 614 195</u>	R <u>8 699 569</u>

THE SEDIBENG TRUST

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME – for the year ended 31 December 2016

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Revenue		640 770	670 178
Accommodation income		101 100	163 900
Food income		127 100	148 300
Investment income		254 640	218 156
Insurance Claim Received		-	4 802
Reversal of use of asset		20 000	20 000
Recoveries UPSCA (Rev Akih)		118 080	107 520
Other income		19 850	7 500
Selling, administrative and general expenses		783 772	621 016
Accounting (book-keeping) fees		18 000	11 400
Auditors remuneration		7 500	7 500
Bad debts		-	-
Bank charges		2 611	2,903
Depreciation		54 998	55 776
Food costs		106 658	82 593
Honarium		51 600	38 400
Insurance		24 818	17 215
Management fees		-	-
Municipal charges		99 090	88 943
Printing and stationery		-	999
Refreshments and cleaning		5 502	3 395
Repairs and maintenance		76 928	35 693
Salaries and wages		317 001	252 508
Security expenses		10 971	6 553
Sundry expenses		-	-
Travel and conference costs		5 016	10 120
Telephone, internet and postage		6 280	4 618
Workmans Compensation		(3 200)	2 400
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		R <u>-143,002</u>	R <u>49 162</u>

Handwritten signature/initials

THE SEDIBENG TRUST

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUNDS – for the year ended 31 December 2016

	<u>Trust Capital</u>	<u>Retained income</u>	<u>Reserves</u>	<u>Total</u>
Balance at 31.12.2014	R 7 026 705	R (776 005)	R 2 290 451	R 8 541 151
Changes in equity for 2015				-
Deficit / Surplus for the year		49 162		49 162
Fair Value Adjustments			105 741	105 741
Stellenbosch project	(20 000)			(20 000)
Balance at 31.12.2015	R <u>7,006,705</u>	R <u>-726,843</u>	R <u>2 396 192</u>	R <u>8 676 054</u>
Changes in equity for 2016				
Deficit / Surplus for the year		(143 002)		(143 002)
Fair Value Adjustments - unit trusts			82 493	82 493
Stellenbosch project	(20 000)			(20 000)
Balance at 31.12.2016	R <u>6 986 705</u>	R <u>(869 845)</u>	R <u>2 478 685</u>	R <u>8 595 545</u>

(Handwritten signatures and initials)

THE SEDIBENG TRUST

CASH FLOW STATEMENT – for the year ended 31 December 2016

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Cash generated from operating activities		-637,988	-151,668
Cash receipts from tenants		366,130	432 022
Cash paid to suppliers and employees		-1,004,118	-583,690
 Cash flows from investing activities		 254 640	 218 156
Acquisition of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Investment income		254,640	218 156
Fair Value Adjustment		-	-
 Cash flows from investing activities		 -	 -
Donation of UPCSA Federal Seminary Funds		-	-
 Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		 (383 348)	 66 488
 Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		 780,486	 713,998
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		R 397,138	R 780,486

THE SEDIBENG TRUST
NOTES – 31 December 2016

1. Significant accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis except for the revaluation of certain non-current assets and financial instruments. The principal accounting policies are set out below.

1.2 Property, plant and equipment

Land and buildings held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, or for administrative purposes, are stated in the statement of financial position at their original cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Properties in the course of construction for production, rental or administrative purposes, or for purposes not yet determined, are carried at cost, less any recognised impairment loss. Cost includes professional fees and, for qualifying assets, borrowing costs capitalised in accordance with the company's accounting policy. Depreciation of these assets, on the same basis as other property assets, commences when the assets are ready for their intended use.

Freehold land is not depreciated.

Depreciation is charged so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets, other than freehold land and properties under construction, over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line basis. The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation methods are reviewed at each year end, with the effect of any changes in estimate accounted for on a prospective basis.

Depreciation is provided on all property, plant and equipment other than freehold land, to write down the cost, less residual value, by equal instalments over their useful lives as follows:

Item	Useful life
Buildings	50 years
Plant and equipment	5 years
Office equipment	5 years

Assets held under finance leases are depreciated over their expected useful lives on the same basis as owned assets or, where shorter, the term of the relevant lease.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal or retirement of an item of property, plant and equipment is determined as the difference between the sales proceeds and the carrying amount of the asset and is recognised in profit or loss.

1.3 Investment property

Investment property, which is property held to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation, is measured initially at its cost, including transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, investment property is measured at fair value. Gains and losses arising from changes in the fair value of investment property are included in profit or loss in the period in which they arise.

1.4 Financial assets

Investments are recognised and derecognised on trade date where the purchase or sale of an investment is under a contract whose terms require delivery of the investment within the time frame established by the market concerned, and are initially measured at fair value, plus transaction costs, except for those financial assets classified as at fair value through profit or loss, which are initially measured at fair value.

Financial assets are classified into the following specified categories: financial assets at fair value through profit or loss' (FVTPL), 'held to maturity' investments, 'available for sale' (AFS) financial assets and 'loans and receivables'. The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition.

Effective interest method

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest revenue over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts (including all fees on points paid or received that form an integral part of the effective interest rate, transaction costs and other premiums or discounts) through the expected life of the financial asset, or where appropriate, a shorter period.

Revenue is recognised on an effective interest basis for debt instruments other than those financial assets designated as at FVTPL.

1.4.1 Financial assets at FVTPL

Financial assets are classified as at FVTPL where the financial asset is either held for trading or it is designated as at FVTPL.

A financial asset is classified as held for trading if:

- * it has been acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the near future; or
- * It is a part of an identified portfolio of financial instruments that the entity manages together and has a recent actual pattern of short-term profit-taking; or
- * It is a derivative that is not designated and effective as a hedging instrument.

A financial asset other than a financial asset held for trading may be designated as at FVTPL upon initial recognition if:

- * such designation eliminates or significantly reduces a measurement or recognition inconsistency that would otherwise arise; or
- * the financial assets forms part of a group of financial assets or financial liabilities or both, which is managed and its performance is evaluated on a fair value basis, in accordance with the entity's documented risk management or investment strategy, and information about the grouping is provided internally on that basis; or
- * it forms part of a contract containing one or more embedded derivatives, and IAS 39 *Financial instruments: Recognition and Measurement* permits the entire combined contract (asset or liability) to be designated as at FVTPL.

Financial assets at FVTPL are stated at fair value, with any resultant gain or loss recognised in profit or loss. The net gain or loss recognised in profit or loss incorporates any dividend or interest earned on the financial asset. Fair value is determined in the manner described.

1.5 Loans and receivables

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as loans and receivables. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment. Interest revenue is recognised by applying the effective interest rate, except for short-term receivables when the recognition of interest would be immaterial.

1.6 Taxation

There is no provision for taxation as the trust is a registered Public Benefit Organisation and enjoys tax exempt status in terms of Section 10(1) of the Income Tax Act.

1.7 Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the entity has a present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event, it is probable that the entity will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at the reporting date, taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the obligation. Where a provision is measured using the cash flows estimated to settle the present obligation, its carrying amount is the present value of those cash flows.

When some or all of the economic benefits required to settle a provision are expected to be recovered from a third party, the receivable is recognised as an asset if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received and the amount of the receivable can be measured reliably.

1.8 Revenue recognition

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable. Revenue is reduced for value added tax, estimated customer returns, rebates and other similar allowances.

1.8.1 Rendering of services

Revenue from a contract to provide services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract. The stage of completion of the contract is determined as follows:

* Servicing fees included in the price of products sold are recognised by reference to the proportion of the total service cost of providing the servicing for the product sold, taking into account historical trends in the number of services actually provided on past goods sold; and

1.8.2 Dividend and interest revenue

Dividend revenue from investments is recognised when the shareholder's right to receive payment has been established.

Interest revenue is accrued on a time basis, by reference to the principal outstanding and at the effective interest rate applicable, which is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset to that asset's net carrying amount.

THE SEDIBENG TRUST
NOTES – as at the 31ST OF December 2016

2. Property, plant and equipment

	2016			2015		
	<u>Cost/ valuation</u>	<u>Accumulated depreciation</u>	<u>Carrying amount</u>	<u>Cost/ valuation</u>	<u>Accumulated depreciation</u>	<u>Carrying value</u>
Land	200 000	-	200 000	200 000	-	200 000
Garden Wall	16 990	(13 309)	3 681	16 990	(9 911)	7 079
Stellenbosch (use of asset)	200 000	(85 000)	115 000	200 000	(65 000)	135 000
Buildings	1 580 548	(376 006)	1 204 542	1 580 548	(344 406)	1 236 142
Computers and office equipment	47 908	(47 907)	1	47 908	(47 907)	1
Furniture, fittings and equipment	321 741	(321 740)	1	321 741	(321 740)	1
Security equipment	14 130	(14 129)	1	14 130	(14 129)	1
Zimbabwe Investment	279 682	-	279 682	175 681	-	175 681
	<u>R 2 660 999</u>	<u>R (858 092)</u>	<u>R 1 802 907</u>	<u>R 2 556 998</u>	<u>R (803 094)</u>	<u>R 1 753 905</u>

Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment - 2016

	<u>Opening balance</u>	<u>Additions/ disposals</u>	<u>Revaluations</u>	<u>Depreciation</u>	<u>Closing Balance</u>
Land	200 000	-	-	-	200 000
Garden Wall	7 079	-	-	(3 398)	3 681
Stellenbosch (use of asset)	135 000	-	-	(20 000)	115 000
Buildings	1 236 142	-	-	(31 600)	1 204 542
Computers and office equipment	1	-	-	-	1
Furniture, fittings and equipment	1	-	-	-	1
Security equipment	1	-	-	-	1
Zimbabwe Investment	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>R 1 578 224</u>	<u>R -</u>	<u>R -</u>	<u>R -54,998</u>	<u>R 1 523 226</u>

Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment - 2015

	<u>Opening balance</u>	<u>Additions/ disposals</u>	<u>Revaluations</u>	<u>Depreciation</u>	<u>Closing Balance</u>
Land	200 000	-	-	-	200 000
Garden Wall	10 477	-	-	(3 398)	7 079
Stellenbosch (use of asset)	155 000	-	-	(20 000)	135 000
Buildings	1 267 742	-	-	(31 600)	1 236 142
Computers and office equipment	779	-	-	(778)	1
Furniture, fittings and equipment	1	-	-	-	1
Security equipment	1	-	-	-	1
	<u>175 681</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>175 681</u>
	<u>R 1 809 681</u>	<u>R -</u>	<u>R -</u>	<u>R (55 776)</u>	<u>R 1 578 224</u>

Land and buildings comprise of ERF 334 Menlo Park ,Reg Div JR, Gauteng with improvements consisting of a residential unit situated at 21 9th street, Menlo Park, Pretoria. Acquired in 2004. Unencumbered, measured according to the cost model. Depreciated over a period of 50 years on the straight line method.

The Sedibeng Trust acquired the use of part of a property in Stellenbosch to help accommodate students. An amount of two hundred thousand Rand was paid to use the property for a period of ten years.

The Sedibeng Trust made a contribution towards a property in Harare, Zimbabwe, to accommodate Ministry students studying in Zimbabwe.

THE SEDIBENG TRUST
NOTES – as at the 31ST OF December 2016

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
3. Investments		
Available for sale Instrument:		
Coronation Equity Fund	3,657,567	3,412,075
Money Market Account	<u>2,225,000</u>	<u>2,225,000</u>
	<u>5,882,567</u>	<u>5,637,075</u>
4. Trade and Other receivables		
Debtors	531 966	534 074
Provision for Doubtful Debts	<u>(7 035)</u>	<u>(7 035)</u>
	524 931	527 039
Deposits	5 650	5 650
Sundry Recievables (electricity prepaid)	<u>1 000</u>	<u>12 914</u>
	R <u>531 581</u>	R <u>545 603</u>
5. Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Standard Bank Cheque Account	26 209	6 046
Market Link Account	369 308	774 440
Cash on hand	<u>1 622</u>	<u>-</u>
	R <u>397 138</u>	R <u>780 486</u>
6. Trust Capital		
Trust Capital arises from the following donations:		
6.1 Estate of the late I M Lusi and the trustees of the Isabel Lusk Charitable Trust	5 876 713	5 876 713
6.2 The General Assembly of the UPCSA of the Federal Seminary Funds.	594 992	612 492
6.3 Other Accomodation Projects (funds)	<u>515 000</u>	<u>535 000</u>
	<u>6 986 705</u>	<u>7 024 205</u>
7. Reserves	<u>2,478,685</u>	<u>2,396,192</u>

Fair Value Adjustments arising from revaluation of available for sale instruments.
Recognised directly into equity.

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
8. Trade and other payables		
Deposits held	6,500	5,725
Accruals	-	2,706
Provisions	12,150	15,085
Other payables : UPCSA	-	-
	<u>18,650</u>	<u>23,516</u>

9. Taxation

There is no provision for taxation as the trust is a registered Public Benefit Organisation and enjoys tax exempt status in terms of Section 10(1) of the Income Tax Act.

CHURCH OFFICE COMMITTEE

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission

1. Composition of committee

The Rev Prof MJ Masango (Acting Convenor), Rt Rev R Munthali (Moderator), Rev ME Ramulondi, Rev P Langerman (Moderator Designate), Rev L Mphetsheni (Gen Sec), Rev S Mtetwa, Rev Z A Makalima, Mr R Johnson (General Treasurer and Chairman of Finance Committee), Mr H O Cochrane, Dr I Taylor, Mr M Kwenje and Mrs A Chulu.

2. Convenors: Goal-setting and Performance Evaluations, Central Office Staff

The COC is arranging a workshop on goal-setting and standardised performance appraisals for Central Office staff and Convenors representing the Finance Committee, Assembly Business Committee, Ministry Committee, and Church Office Committee. The Convenor of the Education and Training Committee and the PEF Administrator (reporting in to this Committee) are included in the workshop. The aims of the workshop are *firstly* to standardise goal-setting and performance appraisal activities across Committees, their Convenors and their respective Central Office Staff members. *Secondly*, the workshop will help clarify roles, mandates, role boundaries and accountability to and by the Convenors, their Committees and their respective Central Office staff members. *Thirdly*, with assistance from a Labour Lawyer invited to the same workshop, the standardised goal setting, performance appraisals and role boundary delineations will be clarified within the context of current Labour Law practices. This workshop is intended to happen on the 14th June 2017 or as soon as possibly thereafter (at the time of this Supplementary report dates have not yet been finalized as it would be necessary for all stakeholders to attend).

3. Relocation of the Central Office to Gateway Church

Negotiations have started concerning the relocation of the Central Office to Gateway Uniting Presbyterian Church in Kempton Park. The proposed relocation is envisaged to take place within the next two to three years. Gateway Uniting Presbyterian Church is located near the OR Tambo airport (Johannesburg), and the premises offer ideal office space as well as accommodation for visitors to the Central Office. The intended sale of the Central Office property and relocation to Gateway Uniting Presbyterian Church should provide the denomination with substantial cost saving benefits relating to the running of the Central Office, travel time to and from the airport, and savings associated with on-site accommodation. Full details will be reported at the 2018 General Assembly.

4. COC Members from Zimbabwe and Zambia

Since submitting our COC report we have managed to make contact with our COC members from Zimbabwe and Zambia and we have made arrangements with both of them to attend future COC meetings. The COC was able to welcome Mr Kwenje from Zimbabwe at its most recent meeting.

THE REV PROF MAAKE J MASANGO
CONVENER

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the goal setting and performance appraisal workshop for General Assembly Committee Convenors, their respective Central Office staff members, and the alignment of these goal setting and performance appraisal activities with current Labour law.
3. The Executive Commission notes the current negotiations concerning the relocation of the Central Office to Gateway Uniting Presbyterian Church.
4. The Executive Commission notes that COC members from Zimbabwe and Zambia are now able to attend COC meetings at Central Office.

THE COURT OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY & THE ASSEMBLY ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PANEL

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

The members of the Court/ARP, as elected by the Twelfth General Assembly (2016) are as follows:

Ministers

Patricia (Pat) Baxter
Rod Botsis
George Marchinkowski (Convener)
Vusi Mabo
Maake Masango
Vusi Mkhungo (Clerk)
Vuyani Vellem

Elders

Overs Banda
Herman Booysen
Harry Bopape
Hylton Cochrane
Mxolisi Gelese
Lungelo Mbandazayo

Alternates

Melanie Cook
Siba Loni
Sandisele Xhinti

Andile Maxham
Nora Zidyana
Benson Njobvu

1. Record of work done between the 2015 Executive Commission and General Assembly

Since the General Assembly in July 2016, there have been no cases heard by the Court but the Administrative Review Panel has considered the following matters:

1. Appeal by some members of Khayelihle Congregation, Thekwini Presbytery. This was referred to the General Secretary for mediation on 1 September 2016.
2. Application for Review by the Rev. Thomson Mkandawire. This was referred to the Synod of Zambia ARP on 1 September 2016.
3. Application for Review of the JH Soga ARP decision by Mthatha Presbytery which was **DISMISSED** on 10 November 2016.
4. Rev Siba Loni's complaint about non-implementation of the AARP decision. This was referred to the Moderator of Assembly for investigation.
5. Rev. Prof. Hansie Wolmarans – General Assembly 2016 decision. A complaint was received from the Revs. Brent Russell and Jeremy Smith. See decision below.

2. The Complaint against the Rev. Prof. JLP Wolmarans

At its meeting on 1 September, the Court of Assembly received a Complaint transmitted from the General Assembly alleging teaching contrary to the Holy Scriptures on the part of the Rev. Prof. JLP (Hansie) Wolmarans. After deliberation, the Court made a unanimous decision, instructing me to write to the Moderator of Assembly with the following concerns:

(a) The Assembly failed to appoint a committee to investigate whether there was a legitimate charge to answer (18.60) and

(b) the Assembly appointed the accuser/s as its very own representative/s.

The Court, therefore respectfully suggested:

1. The Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of the General Assembly appoint a Commission, in terms of para 18.60, to investigate the accusations against the Rev. Prof. JLP Wolmarans to determine whether there is a charge to be answered and, if there is, to administer the "Informal Procedure" outlined in paras. 18.63 – 68. A precedent exists for such a process in para 10. 41 (e) albeit in another situation.
2. That the Moderator report on this action to the Executive Commission in 2017 outlining the necessity to expedite this matter and considering the devastating cost implications of calling a Special General Assembly meeting to do this.

These steps were taken owing to the seriousness of the allegations and the potential sentence that may be imposed if the allegations are proved true. They were also taken mindful of the requirements of the *Manual of Faith and Order* and the fact that we have not had such a trial as the one envisaged in living memory. Our intention, at all times, has been that the integrity of the process be maintained and that all parties be treated fairly and without favour. We also want to safeguard the UPCS from future legal action.

We await the report of the Moderator's Commission which is to be presented to the Executive Commission.

**GW MARCHINKOWSKI
CONVENER**

Proposals:

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

MATTER INVOLVING SEMPLE MEMORIAL CONGREGATION/REV. SO LONI/AMATHOLE PRESBYTERY AND AARP OF THE UPCSA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Supplementary Report of the Moderator's Commission to the Executive Commission 2017

1. Introduction

At the 2015 Executive Commission held within the bounds of East Griqualand Presbytery (Matatiele), the AARP/Court of Assembly reported as follows:

"The matter between Mqalo and others and Amathole Presbytery, and between Rev SO Loni and Amathole Presbytery were heard. These two matters were conjoined (heard together) and dismissed by the AARP."

Again, at the 2016 General Assembly, the AARP/Court of Assembly proposed that the following paragraph be inserted into chapters 15 and 18 of the Manual of faith and Order:

"If an accusation is made that a decision of the AARP or the Court of Assembly has not been implemented, the Convener of the Court/AARP may request a special committee of the General Assembly, consisting of the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer (who are hereby authorized to act as such a committee) to appoint a commission. The Commission then has powers to investigate the accusation and see to it that the decision of the Court/AARP is implemented. The powers are the same as those envisaged in paras. 10.55 – 59."

Soon after the 2016 General Assembly, the Moderator was approached by the Convener of the AARP, as he (the Convener) had received a letter from the Rev SO Loni, complaining that the decision of the AARP that had been taken on 4 February 2015 had not been implemented. The Rev. SO Loni wrote this letter in line with the decision of the General Assembly mentioned above

Note: On the 4th February 2015; on a matter between Rev SO Loni and the Presbytery of Amathole; the Assembly Administrative Review Panel of the UPCSA ruled as follows:

"The Applications are dismissed, by unanimous decision of the AARP, on the basis that rule 16.108 of the Manual of Faith and Order requires an arrangement between the Minister and the Session before application may be made. In this matter the Rev. Loni did not facilitate an arrangement with the Session of Semple Memorial Congregation, nor submit such within the required time limits. The applications are accordingly dismissed."

The AARP is also of the opinion that the Presbytery of Amathole failed to properly advise and support Rev. Loni in his application and that both parties are therefore at fault in this matter.

The AARP encourages the Rev. Loni to enter into discussions (as meant within rule 16.108) with the Session of Semple Memorial Congregation, to bring the matter to closure, and the Presbytery of Amathole is instructed to assist in this regard."

2. Commission.

Moderator put together a commission of the following persons: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Munthali (Moderator), Rev. Prof. MJ Masango, Rev. Dr. Pat Baxter, Mr Lungelo Mbandazayo and Rev. Vusi Mkhungo (Clerk of Assembly). Upon studying the problem, the commission decided to visit the Presbytery of Amathole on 8 October 2016 to investigate the allegations that were made in the letter of the Rev. SO Loni.

In the meeting with the parties involved, the following transpired:

- (a) Presbytery proved that they had followed up the decision of the AARP.
- (b) The Rev SO Loni had only focussed on the second part, which is an opinion.

It is these two levels of interpretation that has caused problems.

The Rev. SO Loni had an opportunity to apply to the Semple Memorial Congregation for reappointment and his application was declined by the Session. Thereafter, Rev. SO Loni approached the former Clerk of Assembly who drew up a step to step application of the opinion part of the decision of the AARP and sent it to the late Rev. Cliff Leeuw advising him to resolve the stalemate.

Email

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Tom Coulter" <clerk@presbyterian.org.za>

To: "St George's Presbyterian Church" <stgeorgesel@telkomsa.net>

Cc: "George Marchinkowski" <marchinkowski@icloud.com>

Sent: Monday, July 20, 2015 4:57:28 PM

Subject: Compliance with findings of AARP

Dear Cliff,

Further to our conversation earlier this afternoon I enclose a copy of the findings for your attention. Please follow up with the Moderator and Clerk of the Presbytery and emphasise the following:

1. While the matter was dismissed the Presbytery are still required to facilitate closure on the matter.
2. In order to achieve closure the parties are required to revert to the provisions of para 16.108 in the Manual of Faith and Order.
3. This would require compliance with all the provisions of 16.108 in that:
 - i The Presbytery would need to ensure a meeting between the session of Semple and Rev Loni takes place in the manner set out in 16.108.
 - ii The agenda of this meeting would be for Rev Loni to approach the session as though he were initiating discussions around negotiating a further contract and reaching an arrangement.
 - iii It would to all intents and purposes be a case of turning the clock back to ensure 16.108 is followed as required.
 - iv Rev Loni to establish with the session if the relationship should continue and on what basis or terms or if the congregation no longer wishes to continue the relationship.
 - v Should the session wish to proceed with a further appointment then this should then go before the Presbytery in the normal way as prescribed by 16.108.

Please feel free to discuss this with me if you wish and inform Rev Loni of the arrangements made. The main focus of the process set out above is to allow for closure in that Rev Loni has met with the session and they have decided whether or not to enter into a new contract/arrangement.

It is also important that the Presbytery are required to comply with the findings of the AARP in their entirety, in that the findings were in two distinct parts.

Regards,

Tom

This was not received by either the Presbytery or the Congregation of Semple Memorial. Later, the AARP distanced themselves from the plan.

In a Pastoral way, the Commission encouraged the Congregation to meet with the Rev SO Loni, so as to bring the matter to a closure. A letter was sent to this effect was sent on 11 November 2016. Apparently, this advice was not taken. Subsequent to this, the Convener of the AARP received correspondence from the lawyers representing some concerned members of the congregation demanding the withdrawal of the same letter. The Convener referred the letter from the lawyers to the General Secretary of the UPCS who engaged with the lawyers, with the view to allow the matter to be tabled at the Executive Commission. There was a total of six letters from the lawyers and equal number of responses from the General Secretary. In that communication process, the General Secretary brought the matter to the attention of the Commission to re-look into the matter.

In re-looking into the matter, the commission found out that actually there is only one decision that was taken unanimously by the AARP, namely:

"The Applications are dismissed, by unanimous decision of the AARP, on the basis that rule 16.108 of the Manual of Faith and Order requires an arrangement between the Minister and the Session before application may be made. In this matter the Rev. Loni did not facilitate an arrangement with the Session of Semple Memorial Congregation, nor submit such within the required time limits. The applications are accordingly dismissed."

The Commission also came to the realization that the stalemate within the Amathole Presbytery was based on personal differences and different interpretations of the decision of the AARP, in that others focused on the decision whilst others were focusing on the opinion. The Commission resolved to withdraw the letter of the 11 November 2016, so as to allow for an atmosphere that would be conducive for further engagements.

Second Visit to the Presbytery of Amathole

Upon realization of these differing views, the Commission decided to re-visit the Presbytery of Amathole on a Pastoral approach rather than the judicial approach. This took place on Friday, 19 May 2017. The purpose of this visit was to clarify the decision of the AARP but also to listen to the experiences, hurts and pains that had been caused by these differing interpretations.

It was discovered that the Rev SO Loni had been largely hurt by the fact that Semple Memorial Congregation has been in limbo throughout this whole time. He felt that justice should be done. On the other hand, the representatives of the congregation, including the Session Clerk, reported that the Congregation had moved on and was not in limbo, but was in good heart. They have been asking and planning to have a new minister appointed.

The Commission also discovered that the Presbytery had also been hurt in that it was taking too long to have this matter resolved, as it had the potential to polarize the Presbytery and damage interpersonal relationships.

Way Forward

- (i) A considerable period of time has elapsed since the Congregation parted ways with the Rev. SO Loni and since the Session has declined his application for re-appointment. It would help if the Rev SO Loni would release the Congregation in order for it to move forward.
- (ii) The commission recommends that the Presbytery of Amathole journeys with Semple Memorial Congregation, facilitating healing and reconciliation processes and ascertain the readiness of the congregation to receive a new minister.
- (iii) The Presbytery of Amathole is also requested to facilitate a process of healing for the Rev. SO Loni.
- (iv) The decision of the 4th February 2015 by the AARP remains in force.

RT. REV. DR. ROBERT MUNTHALI MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that the appointment of the Rev Loni to the Semple Memorial Congregation lapsed on 31 August 2014 as determined in the processes leading to the decision of the AARP.
3. The Executive Commission encourages the Presbytery of Amathole to facilitate the healing and reconciliation processes within the Semple Memorial Congregation.
4. The Executive Commission encourages the Presbytery of Amathole to facilitate a process of healing for the Rev. SO Loni.
5. The Executive Commission declares that this matter has now put to closure.

COMMITTEE REPORT ON REV PROF J.L.P. WOLMARANS

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. We wish to give God Almighty the glory and thanks for giving us this great opportunity to participate in the life and work of His church. As a committee we attended to this assignment with the seriousness and sensitivity it deserve. We believe discernment is a process and no one man possess the monopoly of such a gift its given to a people just like us so that we may discern the mind of God for His Church. During this process God's desire might be in conflict with our own. We hope at the end of the day the church of Jesus Christ shall be edified.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE

- 1.1. The Rev Dr C.N. Mkandawire; The Rev R.C. Blackwell; and Elder H.G. Booysen.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

2. The purpose of this report is to provide an account of the meetings conducted with Rev Prof Hansie Wolmarans as an informal procedure following the issuing of a formal charge sheet of alleged misconduct emanating from a complaint tabled at the 12th General Assembly of the UPCS; and to make recommendations to the Executive Commission of the UPCS.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

3. The terms of reference of the Committee are contained in paragraphs 18.60 to 18.68 of the *Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCS* (the *Manual*). It reads, in part, as follows:

INFORMAL PROCEDURE

18.60 When an act of misconduct is alleged the Council may, if it wishes, appoint a committee to investigate and report on the circumstances.

18.63 Before the formal judicial procedure begins an alleged offender is offered the opportunity to admit guilt (ie to confess to the whole or part of what is alleged) and to show that he/she has repented.

18.67 If the Court of the General Assembly is to act as a Court of first instance, which is rare but is permissible, the rules are the same as for a Presbytery and its Court above.

18.68 If an alleged offender confesses guilt and repents, and the commission from whichever Court it has come decides that no further action need be taken, the hearing is at an end. Should the alleged offender, within a period of seven years thereafter, be accused of the same or similar misconduct, the informal procedure is not repeated. The hearing goes forward immediately under the formal procedure.

BACKGROUND

4. By way of background, the events leading up to the establishment of this Committee may be summarised as below. This summary is not intended as a full and complete factual account, but seeks merely to inform the reader as to the reasons and the purpose why this Committee was established.
- 4.1. During the proceedings of the 12th General Assembly of the UPCS held in July 2016, a motion was tabled before the Assembly to charge Rev Prof J.L.P. Wolmarans for misconduct (heresy). Since the Assembly was sitting as a Council (i.e. not in a judicial capacity), the charges were received as a complaint in terms of par 18.59 of the *Manual* and referred to the Court of Assembly for further processing.
- 4.2. General Assembly appointed the Rev Brent Russell and the Rev Jeremy Smith as Representatives in the matter.
- 4.3. General Assembly neglected to appoint a Committee and Commission to apply the informal procedure in terms of par 18.65, read with par 18.67 of the *Manual*.
- 4.4. At a meeting of the Court of the Assembly, the lack of an appointed Committee/Commission was considered and, as the disciplinary process could not proceed in its absence, the Court recommended to the Moderator of General Assembly to appoint a Committee/Commission.
- 4.5. The Moderator of General Assembly appointed the following to the Committee in this matter: the Rev Dr C.N. Mkandawire; the Rev R.C. Blackwell; and Elder H.G. Booysen.

- 4.6. Having given due notice to the Rev Prof Wolmarans, the Committee conducted the informal meeting with him at Tiyo Soga House on 9 December 2016.
- 4.7. Upon reflection following the meeting held in December 2016, the Commission, in consultation with the Representatives of General Assembly as well as the Clerk and the Convenor of the Court of Assembly, came to the conclusion that the procedure followed during the above-mentioned meeting was flawed in that it did not interrogate a formal charge sheet. It was therefore decided that the informal procedure should include a meeting with the accused member where the formal charge sheet may be discussed.
- 4.8. The Representatives of General Assembly having drafted a formal charge sheet, the formal charges were delivered to the accused member. It was agreed that a meeting be held on 26 April 2017.
- 4.9. This report, therefore, includes the outcome of the meeting held on December 26 April 2017.

PARTIES CONSULTED

5. During the December 2016 meeting with Prof Wolmarans, the following persons were present: the Rev Dr C.N. Mkandawire (convener and chairperson); Elder H.G. Booysen (scribe); the Rev R.C. Blackwell (additional member); the Rev Prof J.L.P. Wolmarans (accused/defendant); and Elder Ken McArthur (advisor to defendant). The same persons were present during the April 2017 meeting, at which time Elder Misha Tolsdorff accompanied the defence team. The Convenor ruled that, since this is a new meeting at which the formal charge sheet was to be interrogated for the first time, Elder Tolsdorff was allowed to join in the proceedings.

DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

6. The Committee considered the following documentary evidence:
 - 6.1. *Allegation of misconduct against Rev Prof JLP Wolmarans* by Rev B. Russell, dated 10 July 2016. Appendixed thereto: *Notice of Motion: General Assembly 2016*.
 - 6.2. *Allegation of misconduct against Rev Prof JLP Wolmarans* by Rev J.R. Smith, dated 5 August 2016. Appendixed thereto: An explanatory document of 6 pages under the heading *Allegation of Misconduct*.
 - 6.3. *En Route to an Alternative, Secular Christianity* by Hansie Wolmarans (the *En Route* article).
 - 6.4. *Immanent transcendence in a postfoundational religion: an impossible dream?* By Johannes Wolmarans.
 - 6.5. Extract from *Proceedings and Decisions of the 12th General Assembly of the UPCS*A (specifically as regards the complaint against Defendant).
 - 6.6. The *Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCS*A, specifically paragraphs 18.63 to 18.68; and also chapters 1 and 2.
 - 6.7. Document submitted by The Rev Prof Wolmarans at the December 2016 meeting containing his responses to the initial allegations/complaint submitted by the complainants.
 - 6.8. The formal charge sheet, containing a total of eight charges against Rev Prof J.L.P. Wolmarans, as submitted by the Representatives of General Assembly.
 - 6.9. Document submitted by the Rev Prof Wolmarans at the April 2017 meeting containing his responses to the formal charge sheet submitted by the Representatives of General Assembly.

THE CHARGES

7. The formal charge sheet is self-explanatory, although the individual charges are quoted in the forthcoming section along with the established facts, explanation by the defendant, the analysis thereof, and the conclusions of the Wolmarans Commission.

EVALUATION OF CHARGES

8. The individual charges are dealt with in this section. However, Committee needs to point out that the charges contain allegations of "teachings" by the member, but the charge sheet itself fails to reference the various quotations to a specific time, place, or medium, in many instances. For the purpose of this report, where the charge sheet fails to provide the reference, Committee had no option but to refer back to the original documents of complain received from complainants before the December 2016 meeting.

8.1. CHARGE 1

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that you did the following:

Asserted that "A theistic God does not exist" which contradicts sections 3, 4, 5 and 13 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCS.

DEFENDANT'S REPLY

We must always keep in mind the *Confession of Faith* of the UPCS which states, 'God is always transcendent, infinite, mysterious, beyond human comprehension...' (Article 2). We are only able to imagine God in different ways. I indicated in the article that the theistic view of God as a heavenly puppet master pulling the strings and intervening from time to time comes up against serious intellectual, philosophical and scientific challenges. There is anecdotal but no scientific evidence that God reacts to prayers.

FACTS

In his paper as referenced above, the Rev Prof Wolmarans states under the heading "Abstract" as follows:

The traditional Christian foundational beliefs (e.g. that a theistic God exists, that God reveals Godself in the Bible, and that reality is dualistic in nature), as well as Christianity's typical master narrative (the Fall, Redemption and Final Judgement), do not stand up to scientific, philosophical, and moral scrutiny.

ANALYSIS

- a. In the absence of particular reference to the source of the quotation contained in the charge, Committee referred to the original documents of complaint. From that source, it is presumed that the quotation was meant to have been taken from the article *En Route to an Alternative, Secular Christianity* by Hansie Wolmarans.
- b. There is no Biblical reference to the term *theism*. The term does not appear in any of the writings of the early Christian Church Fathers. It derives from the Greek θεός (*Theos*) meaning "God". The term was first used by Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688). In Cudworth's definition, they are "strictly and properly called Theists, who affirm, that a perfectly conscious understanding being, or mind, existing of itself from eternity, was the cause of all other things".
- c. There is no reference to the term *theism* – in this or in any other form – in the *Manual* and does not form part of our *Confessions of Faith*.
- d. In his paper, the Rev Prof Wolmarans does not use the words "a theistic God does not exist". He states, instead, that the religious philosophy of theism does not stand up to scientific, philosophical, and moral scrutiny. He makes no faith-based conclusion on the matter of theism.
- e. The Rev Prof Wolmarans further pointed out that, in Chapter 20, Article 2 of the *Westminster Confession*, room is available for Liberty of Conscience as a principle. Article 3 of the same confession also deals with the applicability of orthopraxy as opposed to orthodoxy.
- f. The Rev Prof Wolmarans indicated that his Theological approach is Protestant Liberal and thus understands the Bible from such an approach.

CONCLUSION

- a. The allegation as formulated is factually incorrect as to the actual wording of the paper in question. Committee found it puzzling that this mistake, which also occurred in the original document containing the allegations against the member, was transferred to the charge sheet unchecked and uncorrected. It is simply inaccurate and has been proven so.
- b. It must be noted that Protestant Liberal Theology is a valid Theological perspective within Systematic Theology and is used within mainstream Theological debate to help understand Holy Scripture and Doctrine.
- c. There is no charge discernible in this allegation – there is no clear rule or church law that has been contravened, nor does it contradict the *Confession of Faith* of the UPCS. This charge must fall away.

8.2. CHARGE 2

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that you did the following:

Asserted that "the resurrection was not a historical bodily resurrection by stating that "resurrection narratives of Jesus should be read as myth" and that the "resurrection was the result of Jesus life being interpreted into the typical Greek of the hero" which contradicts [paragraphs 2.6 and 12.2 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCS and line 9 of the Apostles Creed and line 20 of the Nicene Creed.

DEFENDANT'S REPLY

This is true. I don't understand why it is wrong to make this statement. *Mythos* is a very technical term, and defined as discourses which basically explain or explore events on earth in terms of supernatural realities. Per definition, this statement is just a fact. It is used by many theological scholars, *inter alia* Karin Armstrong. This has serious implications for out interpretation of the Bible. We cannot interpret the two stories of creation in Genesis Chapter One literally (they contradict one another in any case). Their message lies on another level than the literal.

FACTS

- a. Wolmarans writes on p 151 of the *En Route* article under the heading "Abstract":

The outline of a postfoundational secular theology is explored based upon the assumption that the Bible be read as *mythos* not as *logos*. Implications are drawn for the reinterpretation of some Christian rituals as rites of passage.

- b. On p 151 of the article under the heading "Introduction", Wolmarans states:

... I will make some remarks on human beings as essentially in search of meaning. The distinction between two types of discourse, *mythos* and *logos*, is explained next. This is of paramount importance, as traditional Christian theology regards the Bible as *logos* (unquestionable truths) and not as *mythos* (symbolic language used to talk about life's basic questions).

The following section deals specifically with problems arising when the Bible is read as *logos* and not as *mythos*. This affects the status of doctrines deduced from the Bible.

- c. On p 154 of the article, Wolmarans quotes previous writers who expressed their application of *mythos* and *logos*, namely Karin Armstrong, Noam Chomsky, Hesiod, Homer, and Anaximander. Wolmarans does not directly address the matter of *mythos* in terms of the church or the faith on this page. It is unclear from the charge which of these (if any) has been found offensive by complainant.
- d. Committee did not find the time during the December 2016 meeting to fully interrogate the resurrection of the Christ, and took pains to do so at the April 2017 meeting. In response to a direct question as to defendant's belief in this regard, his (lengthy and most detailed) response may be summarised for the purpose of this analysis as follows:
- Jesus Christ died on the cross and was buried in a tomb as described in the Bible;
 - Jesus Christ died to take away our sins;
 - Jesus Christ descended into Hell (*descendit ad infernos*);
 - Resuscitation of a three day old corpse is impossible by scientific observation. Jesus resurrected body was a spiritual body (meaning of the same substance of the physical body which entered the tomb), but of a different substance we have no understanding of. This body was observed by the disciples. Further Rev Prof Wolmarans indicated that if it were possible that archeology "found" the body of Jesus today it would not change his faith in the resurrection.
 - Christ's rising to life was a victory over death for the redemption of sin, i.e. not the resuscitation of a corpse but rather a spiritual event;
 - Jesus Christ is alive today and lives with and in each of us;
 - We will all be raised with Jesus to a new life (Rom 6:4).

ANALYSIS

- a. The Greek word μῦθος (*mythos*) is translated, among other things, as *a word; speech; thing said, fact, matter, talk of men, rumour, report, message, story, narrative, fable, fiction*, etc. (Liddell & Scott *A Greek-English Lexicon* 1968, Oxford at the Clarendon Press). The word is indeed complex and includes many nuances, both towards truth and fiction. However, the common thread within all its meanings can be described as "story", irrespective of whether true or false.
- b. The Greek word λόγος (*logos*) is translated in the same dictionary quoted above, among others, as *a word, speech, rule, principle, law, thesis, hypothesis, formula, knowledge*, etc. (too many to list here – Liddell & Scott devotes more than 5 columns to this word). The common thread in these meanings that can be discerned (with perhaps a few exceptions) is the element of "true knowledge" or "hard fact".
- c. Complainant's explanation appears to be based on a very narrow meaning of the word *mythos*. Complainant seems to equate *mythos* to the singular meaning of "false story" or "disproven legend", although his description is not very clear due to its brevity.
- d. The Commission agrees that *mythos* is commonly used to explain complex things in simple, everyday terms in order to make sense of it. Therefore, although a particular *mythos* is not

necessarily accurate or factually true, it provides a point of reference for something we had no reference for previously.

- e. 1 Corinthians 15: 35-58 Paul writes about the significant difference between the earthly body and the heavenly body. The earthly body is corruptible and perishable, but the heavenly body is incorruptible and imperishable. This is testified to in the Gospels where the interaction between the disciples and the resurrected Jesus were with a body that did not contain the same properties of an earthly body. For example, Jesus resurrected body could speak (Matthew 28:16-20), appear and disappear (Luke 24:36, John 20: 24-29), eat and be touched (Luke 24:36-43). This is a mystery that we may never understand this side of death.

CONCLUSION

- a. Complainants appear to equate the terms *mythos* and *logos* to the simple, singular translations of *false story* and *true fact*. This over-simplifies the meaning of Wolmarans's article, as the complaint appears to negate the totality of the meaning of these words.
- b. Wolmarans cites the following in explanation of the two terms: "This debate reminds one of the distinction between *mythos* and *logos* drawn by the ancient Greeks [Plato], the first being a story involving supernatural characters, whilst the second has to do with scientific discourse explaining phenomena not from another heavenly realm, but from reality itself".
- c. Committee is of the opinion that this complaint is born from an inadequate understanding of the Greek terminology of *mythos* and *logos*.
- d. Defendant does not rubbish the raising of the Christ to life in the spiritual realm, nor does he deny that Jesus Christ is alive today – in fact, he freely states that Jesus is alive in us and with us.
- e. Committee does not find Wolmarans' views incompatible with the faith of the Church. This charge must, therefore, fail.

8.3. CHARGE 3

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that you did the following:

Asserted that "The virgin birth is misogynistic and an insult to common sense and should be abandoned" and "The doctrine of the virgin birth is not only insulting to common sense, but also misogynistic. It should be abandoned" which contradict para 2.3 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCA and line 5 of the Apostles Creed and line 16 of the Nicene Creed.

DEFENDANT'S REPLY

Smith has problems with my statement that the Virgin Birth is an insult to common sense and misogynistic. However, most modern New Testament scholars regard the birth narratives as stories which started to circulate more than fifty years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

- (a) They do not appear in the oldest Gospel, Mark.
- (b) They appear in Matthew and Luke, but their details differ – clearly a very late addition.
- (c) They do not appear in the latest Gospel, John.
- (d) Paul does not know anything about the virgin birth.
- (e) Isaiah 7:13-14 is quoted out of context as a 'proof' of the virgin birth (Mt. 1:23). Isaiah talks about one of his own sons, who will have the name, "God is on our side". Or, perhaps, he refers to the wife of King Ahaz who would give birth soon.
- (f) Furthermore, we know that the emperor Augustus was supposed to have had a miraculous birth.
- (g) The idea of a virgin birth is based on untenable scientific and ideological assumptions (that the woman makes no contribution to the offspring; she functions like a flower pot in which the make seed grows into a human being) and
- (h) It is based upon the three-storeyed world vision which is not adhered to anymore.

Of course it is important to understand what the two gospels wanted to say when they told these stories – simply that, in contrast with the Emperor, Christians confessed that Jesus was their king. This is the truth of these stories.

Again, we see, that there are very solid literary grounds to read these stories metaphorically.

FACTS

Presuming that the quotations are taken from the article *En Route to an Alternative, Secular Christianity*, Wolmarans, on page 166, concludes on this topic:

Letting go of the doctrine of the virgin birth

The doctrine of the virgin birth is not only insulting to common sense, but also misogynistic. It should be abandoned.

ANALYSIS

- a. The first quotation in the charge does not appear in any of the source documents viewed. However, the second quotation does appear in the article *En Route to an Alternative, Secular Christianity*. Therefore, Committee only considered the second quotation as the first was unsubstantiated and unproven.
- b. Committee notes that the following are facts and cannot, therefore, be ignored when this issue is considered:
 - i. The gospel of Mark, widely considered as the oldest of the four gospels, makes no mention of the virgin birth. It is accepted practice in the analysis of accuracy of different historical accounts that the oldest writing – therefore the closest in time to the actual event – is generally considered the least contaminated by conjectural insertion. Wolmarans's argument on this matter is therefore sound in its grounds for his reasoning on a purely historical basis.
 - ii. The oldest books in the New Testament (the letters of St Paul) make no mention of the virgin birth. The same basis of consideration of historical accuracy applies here.
 - iii. It is indisputable that discrepancies exist between the accounts of Matthew and Luke regarding the virgin birth. Again, in historical research, such discrepancies may point towards conjectural insertion, which supports the argument which Wolmarans puts forward in this context.
- c. In the *Manual*, the word "virgin" appears only twice: Once in the Apostles' Creed, and once in Chapter 2, paragraph 2.3: "For the salvation of the world the eternal Word, the Son of God, humbled himself and by the Holy Spirit took on our humanity in the Virgin Mary's womb". The *Manual* is not very clear as to whether this reference to the *Virgin* Mary actually forms part of the church's Confessions of Faith, or whether it merely qualifies Mary the mother of Christ as distinct from other women also named Mary who appear in Scripture.
- d. The Greek word παρθένος (*parthenos*) is also multifaceted in meaning: While in certain contexts it denotes a woman who has never had sex, it is also translatable as "young female person" or "woman of marriageable age". In the latter context, consideration must be given to the closely-related word παρθενίας (*parthenias*) meaning "marriage" which again points towards the interpretation or base meaning relating to marriage and therefore marriageability.
- e. Committee did not interrogate this issue in depth during the meeting of December 2016, but took pains to cover the matter during the meeting of April 2017. At this occasion, the member stated that his view of the virgin birth is that the concept is untenable in the light of the mythological background of Greek and Roman traditional mythology as well as scientific fact. He further pointed out that the (pre-sexual intercourse) virginity of the mother of Christ was not reported in the writings which could be dated the oldest, but only surfaced in later traditions. From an analysis of the historical writings of the time, the virgin birth seems to have been added at a later time. Committee noted that this method is standard practice with classicists and historians who analyse the writings of historians from that period. Committee further noted that Wolmarans is, by profession, a classicist and expert on Roman and Greek history writing, and therefore, in that context, was trained and was expected to apply this method.

CONCLUSION

- a. Wolmarans' argument that the doctrine of the virgin birth may be an outdated philosophy is, though challenging and difficult to accept by many believers, based upon sound historical research principles and scientific arguments. As mentioned earlier, even the *Manual* in paragraph 6.4 of Chapter 2 encourages (or at the very least leaves room for) different opinions and interpretations.
- b. Committee notes that acceptance or not of the concept of the virgin birth of the Christ does not detract from the core principle of our faith that the self-sacrifice of Jesus has cleansed us from our sins and has enabled us to enter into everlasting life.
- c. Committee further notes that the concept of a virgin birth is impossible in scientific terms, and that Wolmarans was functioning in an academic environment at the time when the article was written. Although many believers will disagree (purely on the basis of faith), the principle cannot withstand scientific discourse. In this respect – when viewed purely on a rational, scientific level – Wolmarans' argument cannot be dismissed out of hand without meaningful debate on the doctrine as a whole.
- d. In the final instance, Committee noted that the concept of the virgin birth is both a matter of personal faith and a deeply emotive issue.
- e. It is Committee's considered opinion that the Church should engage on this issue and provide clear guidelines as to the extent to which it may or may not tolerate various perspectives regarding the doctrine of the virgin birth. Commission notes that the current version of the *Manual* is perhaps too brief on this topic to serve the purpose.
- f. Committee does not find a substantive basis for pursuing this charge.

8.4. CHARGE 4

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church is that you did the following:

Asserted that the doctrine of the atonement is false and should be abandoned and that "the violent doctrine of the crucifixion as redemption for our sins should be abandoned" and that "The traditional master narrative of Christianity has been shown to be false in all aspects: the inspiration of Scriptures, the Fall of humankind; the Incarnation of Jesus; and the doctrine of Atonement." Which contradict paragraphs 2.1, 2.5, 6.14, 7.14, 7.16, 9.4, of the Confession of Faith of the UPCS and line 18 of the Nicene Creed.

DEFENDANT'S REPLY

Smith claims that I said the doctrine of the crucifixion "should be abandoned". False. Again, Smith misquoted me. I said that the interpretation of the crucifixion "as redemption for our sins should be abandoned (it is based on a mistranslation and misinterpretation of Romans 3). I agree with a growing number of Christian theologians who argue that a God who needs a violent death to feel better about sin, is very problematic. Indeed, I argued the case from the Bible itself, namely Hosea 6:6 and Psalm 51 which clearly state that God does not take any delight in sacrifices, but in love... It is, for me better to view the crucifixion of Jesus as his willingness to die for the ideals of God's Kingdom (justice, equality and compassion). This accords with what we know of the historical circumstances surrounding the death of Jesus.

FACTS

Wolmarans writes on page 163 of the *En Route* article:

The doctrine of redemptive violence

On a moral level there are a number of criticisms against Christianity's foundational truths. The Christian mantra, for example, that "Christ died for our sins" is based upon the idea of redemptive violence. It raises the question of what type of God would have his own son sacrificed to make him feel better about the sins of others. For good reason, this can be called a doctrine of divine child abuse.

And on page 166 – 167:

Letting go of the doctrine of redemptive violence

What Jesus did, historically speaking, should be of paramount importance for Christians. The violent doctrine of the crucifixion as redemption for our sins should be abandoned. There exists indeed a scriptural base for this. In Hosea 6:6, for example, God says "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings". In Psalm 51:16-17 it is stated, "For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise".

ANALYSIS

- a. Complainants' quotation from Wolmarans's paper is a misquote. What Wolmarans wrote was: "The violent doctrine of the crucifixion as redemption for our sins should be abandoned" (underlining added).
- b. God (in Jesus Christ) did not die for our sins as our servant; He gave Himself for us. Some believers feel that too much emphasis is being placed on the violence component to the distraction from His self-sacrifice for the redemption of our sins. To reason that God appeased Himself by the violence of Christ's suffering, is folly: God needs no appeasement.
- c. Wolmarans' view is understood to place the emphasis upon the fact that Christ gave Himself for the redemption of sinners, instead of emphasising the violent nature of the way in which the crucifixion took place, as if Christ was a captured victim led to the cross by the unappeased anger of God.
- d. Committee notes that the second portion of this charge contains the same details as Charge 5, and therefore is dealt with under that section below.

CONCLUSION

- a. The misquote in the complaint changes the essence of Wolmarans's argument. What is contained in the complaint is simply not what Wolmarans has written.

- b. Wolmarans does not state that the doctrine of the atonement is false. What he does state is his opinion that the focus, which is often upon the suffering of the Christ, should be shifted to the willingness of the Christ to die on the cross for the ideals of God's Kingdom.
- c. Committee finds that this charge is not only based upon a misinterpretation of Wolmarans' point of view, but also upon a misrepresentation of what he wrote. The charge is without substance.

8.5. CHARGE 5

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that you did the following:

Asserted that "the doctrine of divine inspiration is untenable" and that "The traditional master narrative of Christianity has been shown to be false in all aspects: the inspiration of Scriptures; the Fall of humankind; the incarnation of Jesus; and the doctrine of Atonement." Which contradicts paragraph 15.2 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA.

DEFENDANT'S REPLY

According to Smith, I state that the doctrine of divine inspiration is untenable. True. I argued it by referring to the Bible's discrepancies and contradictions. Therefore, 'inspiration' is not in the words, but in the effect these human words about God may have on the lives of people."...

I did not use the word 'doctrines' but 'master narrative'. I simply mean that Christianity applied a certain pattern onto history, one which is not borne of by the facts... Scientists agree that the idea of humankind before and after the Fall is not a scientific fact. We are evolved from animals. Furthermore, most biblical scholars agree that the idea of the Fall cannot be deduced from Genesis 1. It was a construct of Augustine in the 4th Century CE. It should also be clear that for Jesus and Paul the return of Jesus was expected as imminent, within this generation (Matthew 24:34); some will still be alive (1 Thess. 4:15). History has proven this expectation to be wrong.

FACTS

Wolmarans wrote in the *En Route* article:

The doctrine of divine inspiration

The proposition that the Bible is God's revelation is also becoming untenable. It is told that late one night at an asylum for the insane, an inmate broke the silence with, "I am Napoleon! You must do what I say!" Another one shouted, "How do you know?" The first inmate bellowed, "God told me so!" A voice from another room cried, "No, I did not!" This anecdote illustrates the impossibility of discerning which of a variety of religions is right when claiming to be the voice of God. In 1 Chronicles 21:1 it is said that the Devil prodded King David to hold a census, while in 2 Samuel 24:1, describing the same incident, it is said that it was God. According to Matthew 27:9-10, Judas committed suicide. According to Acts 1:18 God killed him. These contradictions in the Bible itself concern not only events, but also theologies (God viewed as a tribal God, or as the God of all humanity), and extend to extra-biblical claims of divine authority assigned to other books, like the Qur'an. Barth Ehrman, therefore, reasonably concludes:

It would be impossible, I should think, to argue that the Bible is a unified whole, inerrant in all its parts, inspired by God in every way. It can't be that. There are too many divergences, discrepancies, contradictions ... God did not write the Bible, people did ... But they were not inspired in the sense that God somehow guided them to write what they wrote.

The Rev Prof Wolmarans states under the heading "Abstract" as follows:

The traditional Christian foundational beliefs (e.g. that a theistic God exists, that God reveals Godself in the Bible, and that reality is dualistic in nature), as well as Christianity's typical master narrative (the Fall, Redemption and Final Judgement), do not stand up to scientific, philosophical, and moral scrutiny.

And, under the heading "In Conclusion":

This paper argues that the traditional foundationalist beliefs of Christianity, based upon a dualistic and pre-modern view of the world, are becoming increasingly irrelevant not only as a result of advances in science, philosophy and theology and biblical scholarship, but also from the perspective of morality. A huge mistake on the part of traditional Christianity was to read the Bible as *logos* and not as *mythos*. The traditional master narrative of Christianity has been shown to be false in all aspects: the Inspiration of

Scriptures; the Fall of humankind; the Incarnation of Jesus; and the doctrine of Atonement.

ANALYSIS

- a. As for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, the relevant scripture reading is found in 2 Tim 3:16: *πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος...*
- b. The word *θεόπνευστος* (*theopneustos*) is not found in the Old Testament at all, and only once in the New Testament. Liddell & Scott does not list the word as a separate entry but regards it as a compound of *θεός* (*theos*) and *πνέω* (*pneō*). In its form applied here, it is both used as an adjective and a past participle. Liddell & Scott lists only four occurrences of the word (all New Testament or later – it does not occur in the classical authors or poets at all), proving its rarity and therefore the extreme limitations of interpretative reference.
- c. St Jerome translates the above passage in the Vulgate as *omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est*. While this interpretative translation was used widely in the Roman Catholic Church (and many others) for centuries, it is noted that the meaning of *inspirata* (from *in* + *spiro* = “breathed in/into”) is much narrower than that of *pneō*.
- d. Many scholars and theologians have debated the correct translation or understanding of *theopneustos* and even of *γραφὴ* (*graphē*) within this context. While the debate is almost certain to continue for as long as our faith does, there does not appear to be a definitive answer to be found from Greek texts, either from Biblical times nor from the classical writings. Its interpretation appears to be a matter of faith rather than a lexical one.
- e. Wolmarans does not attack the scriptural content of 2 Tim 3:16. What he does question is its interpretation, and he specifically refers to the *doctrine* of divine inspiration. A doctrine is defined as “a belief or set of beliefs, especially political or religious ones, that are taught and accepted by a particular group” (*Cambridge Dictionary*).
- f. The *Manual* states, in paragraph 6.4 of Chapter 2 as follows:

The same Spirit who spoke through the prophets and Jesus and the apostles inspired the writing of the Scriptures. They record the revelation of God’s grace, will and purpose for the world in the call of Abraham, the liberation and history of Israel, the birth, ministry, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Scripture is thus the sufficient and uniquely authoritative witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God. In that sense it is the Word of God written and the final rule of faith and life.

The *Manual* further explains this paragraph by the following linked footnote:

In adopting the Confession the UPCS recognizes that its members have different (for some, overlapping) views on the relation between the Word of God and Scripture:

- Some fully equate Scripture and the Word of God, regarding it as verbally inspired and infallible.
- Some distinguish between the Word of God and Scripture as its inspired and normative but fallible human record and witness.
- Some emphasize that the Word of God is strictly Jesus Christ, the living Word, and see Scripture as the normative and authoritative witness to Christ that by the power of the Spirit becomes and is the Word of God in bearing such witness (Jn.5:39f., II Cor.3:14-4:6).

All, however, confess that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God, and that the Scriptures are inspired by God and have unique authority.

- g. The *Manual* also states in paragraph 6.9: “... though inspired by the Spirit, the Scriptures are at the same time fully human documents”. In paragraph 6.10 the *Manual* further states: “Indeed as human documents the books of the Bible are conditioned by the thought forms of their times and open to rational analysis. Such analysis helps us understand their literary and historical nature and their social, political, psychological, ideological and religious contexts”. These documents, being fully human, must therefore contain some fallibility – which are open to rational analysis within the entirety of its context.
- h. Wolmarans uses the term “master narrative”. Wolmarans’s article, in this instance, does not attack the basic fundamentals of the Faith, but rather the way in which it is narrated.
- i. *Grand narrative* or *master narrative* is a term introduced by Jean-François Lyotard in his classic 1979 work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, in which Lyotard summed up a range of views which were being developed at the time, as a critique of the institutional and ideological forms of knowledge.
- j. Commission further notes that the portion quoted above under the heading “In Conclusion” appears to be a summary of the arguments earlier in the article, and not an argument in itself. There is ample context in the preceding portions which are not captured in the charge.

CONCLUSION

- a. The accusation is inaccurate in its content insofar it ignores the context and meaning of Wolmarans's writing.
- b. Wolmarans does not attack the church doctrine in his statement, but engages with a master narrative, i.e. stories commonly told in order to make sense of historical knowledge.
- c. On the matter of divine inspiration, the charge is based on the traditional translation of the Greek, which many scholars today regard as interpretatively narrowed instead of accurately translated.
- d. The charge regarding the master narrative of the Church deals only with the conclusion summary of the article whilst ignoring the total context of each of the items listed in the quoted text. It also appears to misinterpret the meaning of "master narrative".
- e. The Committee finds no basis for a charge in this instance.

8.6. CHARGE 6

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that you did the following:

Asserted that the Bible is largely a work of fiction including much of Jesus miracle working and the stories of Jesus birth as well as that his death and resurrection are based on interpretations of Jesus life in light of Greek Roman mythology which contradicts section 6 and paragraphs 15.2 and 22.1 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA.

DEFENDANT'S REPLY

In large part, Defendant's reference to his interpretation of *Theopneustos* (see the relevant section above under Charge 5) explains his view of the doctrine of divine inspiration. Further to that explanation, Defendant responded as follows:

[The Greek word *Theopneustos*] can better be translated that all scripture is about God – therefore not a fax from God.

Defendant further explained his reference to Greco-Roman mythology as follows:

It is ... a reasoned conclusion to argue that the early Christians moulded their experience of Jesus into the thought forms of their times. Jewish religious philosophy was grafted onto Greco-Roman paganism to express the belief of early Christians that, somehow, Jesus was part of what they understood as God.

FACTS

Wolmarans wrote in the *En Route* article:

Regarding the miracle stories in the Bible, Günther Bornkamm and Ernst Käsemann argued that they should be read as story, not as history; as fiction, not as fact...

Karen Armstrong has shown that the literal reading of the Bible is a fairly recent development amongst fundamentalist Christians and dates this to about the end of the 19th century. She demonstrates that the scriptures of both the Old and New Testament in its history were interpreted through various non-literal reading strategies like allegory and typology.

ANALYSIS

- a. The charge alleges that the content of the charge was a "teaching" by Defendant. This is factually incorrect. Wolmarans quoted, in a research article, the points of view of other scholars to reflect the modern-day thinking of these issues. The formulation of the charge twists the content of the article into something it never was.
- b. Defendant does not state that the Bible is largely a work of fiction. This is a misquote and is inaccurate to the point where it fails to hold water as a provable allegation.
- c. Committee notes that Jesus' teachings frequently contained parables which are not regarded as true accounts of actual events, but rather stories to demonstrate the basic principles of the Faith. To interpret the parables, for example, as historical true is folly by any understanding of Scripture.
- d. There can be no doubt that any oral or written tradition of events, as well as its interpretation, must be influenced by its cultural environment in a particular space and time: Jesus was teaching in a Jewish community, living in a Roman-dominated political climate, heavily influenced by Greek culture (not ignoring deep influences by other cultures in the geographical area, e.g. Persia, Egypt, etc.). This is mere fact.

CONCLUSION

- a. Wolmarans did not “teach” the points of view in his article – he quoted the opinions of other scholars to demonstrate the need for re-thinking these issues pertaining to our faith.
- b. Wolmarans is accused of being the source or origin of these philosophies, while his article clearly states that they have been taken from other scholars.
- c. If Wolmarans is proposing a change in our thinking on these issues, then he is, in fact, encouraging a return to an older, more traditional philosophy as demonstrated by his quotation of the work of Karen Armstrong. Committee finds it difficult to understand how a call for a return to more traditional Biblical philosophy may be regarded as grounds for a charge of misconduct.
- d. Committee finds no substance in this charge and it must fall away.

8.7. CHARGE 7

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that you did the following:

Asserted that “The bible as a dubious source of moral behaviour” concluding “that it is impossible to accept the bible any longer as the ultimate source of moral behaviour” which contradicts paragraph 15.2 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA.

DEFENDANT’S REPLY

Smith denounces me for contending that the Bible is a dubious source of moral behaviour. I don’t understand why. How moral is genocide, slavery, human sacrifice, misogyny, religious intolerance, and discrimination against the physically challenged? I refer you here to the excellent book written by John Shelby Spong, 2006, *The sins of Scripture*, Harper San Francisco... Even the ten commandments, if read contextually, are problematic (e.g. a wife is mentioned with oxen and donkeys as the husband’s property; religious intolerance is propagated in the first commandment).

FACTS

Wolmarans writes under the heading *The Bible as dubious source of moral behaviour*:

Literalist readings of the Bible leads to various moral problems. The mythical view that nature was created to be ruled over and used by human beings (Genesis 1) is partly responsible for the current destruction of our environment. Some churches still regard birth control as a sin (based upon Genesis 38:8–10) and this leads to overpopulation. Passages like 1 Timothy 2:12 gave rise to a long tradition of misogyny in the Church which led to the burning of witches. Slavery was defended on the basis of texts like Titus 2:9, apartheid with reference to Acts 17:26, and “Palestine for the Jews” with texts like Genesis 15:18–21.

The Bible seems to condone events like genocide (Deuteronomy 20), selling one’s daughter off as a sex slave to cover one’s debt (Exodus 21:7–11), religious intolerance leading to the execution of heretics (2 Kings 23:20–25); human sacrifice (Judges 11:29–40); and discrimination against the physically challenged (Leviticus 21:17–23). It is therefore impossible to accept the Bible any longer as the ultimate source of moral behaviour.

ANALYSIS

- a. The word “moral” is derived from the Latin *mos*: “custom” (pl. *mores*: manners, morals, character) [*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* revised by C.T. Onions, Oxford at the Clarendon Press].
- b. *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics* says that, “For many religious people, morality and religion are the same or inseparable; for them either morality is part of religion or their religion is their morality. For others, especially for nonreligious people, morality and religion are distinct and separable; religion may be immoral or nonmoral, and morality may or should be nonreligious. Even for some religious people the two are different and separable; they may hold that religion should be moral and morality should be, but they agree that they may not be.” (Childress, (ed) James F.; Macquarrie, (ed) John (1986). *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. p. 400. ISBN 0-664-20940-8)
- c. The tension that exists between literalist Biblicism and allegorical Biblicism is an age-old phenomenon, which is certain to continue through the ages. While, for some believers, the literal interpretation of Biblical values is absolute, other believers take a more holistic view of Biblical values, thereby interpreting the moral values of the Bible in total context, which is not absolute in every Bible passage unless it is read alongside other passages.

- d. It is a fact that some passages in the Bible promote values that are in conflict with modern-day secular values, such as slavery, gender discrimination, etc. The church cannot pretend to be unaware of this.
- e. Committee notes that moral behaviour is informed by context and culture: in Biblical times, it was good for the *paterfamilias* to regard his wife as a possession. Not so today. Commission also notes how Jesus gave new vision on the teaching of Moses on the topic of divorce. Since our faith embraces the incarnational theology, it stands to reason that God had to reveal Himself, through the Son, in a (Jewish) cultural context whose culture no longer applies in the same manner.
- f. Committee is of the opinion that the Bible is the ultimate resource for holy behaviour, which does not equate to moral behaviour.

CONCLUSION

- a. Wolmarans does not attack the Bible as a resource for *holy* behaviour, but questions the issue of *moral* behaviour based on the Word of God. This is an existing debate among believers, and is therefore not an argument unique to Wolmarans.
- b. Committee further notes that some practices apparently promoted, tolerated, or by implication condoned in the Bible are no longer regarded as acceptable in modern day social and cultural practice. This includes, among others, slavery, male domination over females, killing of other human beings, etc.
- c. Committee does not find the quoted paragraph 15.2 relevant in this charge: Paragraph 15.2 refers to the influence of the Spirit upon the mind of the believer, not the moral teaching status of Biblical Scripture.
- d. Committee therefore finds no case to be answered in this charge and it must fall away.

8.8. CHARGE 8

Conduct which injures the unity and peace of, or contravenes the law and procedures of, this Church in that you did the following:

Published and circulated the documents of the internet titles *En Route to and Alternative, Secular Christianity (under the title of a minister of the UPCSA)* and *Immanent transcendence in a postfoundational religion: and impossible dream?* Both documents express views overtly contradicting the UPCSA Confession of Faith and the Apostles and Nicene Creeds.

The resultant controversy arising from the circulation of these teachings has created tensions within the denomination and damaged relationships and interpersonal trust between members and certain Presbyteries of the church.

ANALYSIS

- a. The charge sheet fails to supply details of the inferred injury to the unity of the Church and/or contravention of law and procedures of the Church.
- b. Committee found no external knowledge or evidence of the inferred allegations in the charge.
- c. Committee finds this charge vague and unsubstantiated for lack of detail and substantiation.

CONCLUSION

- a. Committee finds no proof or substance in this charge.
- b. The charge fails to stand and is to be dismissed.

FINDINGS

- 9. Having considered the content of the charge sheet and the replies by defendant, Committee has become convicted, once again, of the difficulty experienced in the church in general, and the UPCSA in particular, in marrying the vast range of personal interpretation of the *minutiae* of our faith. It is clear that debates will continue for the rest of the age on certain issues, and that total agreement on each one will in all probability never be attained. However, on the essence of our faith we seem to be united: Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the only-born Son of God, became fully human in order to teach us, lead us by His example, and to give himself as a living sacrifice to free us from our sins. He has triumphed over the power and the consequences of sin and is alive today. In all of this He has proven to us the value of true, divine love and has opened a way to the throne of God to each and every believer. Under the leading of the Holy Spirit, we can meaningfully engage the Word of God and be led to understand the essence of God's Word in order to understand Him and serve Him as He has instructed.
- 10. Apart from the fact that Committee has not found sufficient reason to put the expressed views of Defendant to trial by means of formal charges before the Court of General Assembly, Committee believes that the Court of General Assembly would not be the appropriate platform to make a determination on these issues – the Court would, in all likelihood, be bogged down in long debate in an attempt to interpret all the issues. The Court may even refer some of the issues for debate by General

Assembly for clarification, which may well draw out a disciplinary procedure over many months or even years.

11. Committee believes that the Church needs to note the valid questions raised in Wolmarans' writings and engage in meaningful internal debate to clarify the Church's understanding thereof.
12. Committee views the charges to concern issues lying towards, but not across, the boundaries of traditional church doctrine.
13. Committee finds no case to be answered by the Rev Prof J.L.P. Wolmarans in any of the eight charges brought against him.

**REV DR C.N. MKANDAWIRE
CONVENER OF COMMITTEE**

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission ratifies the appointment of this Committee by the Moderator of General Assembly.
3. The Executive Commission dismisses all the 8 charges issued against Rev. Prof. J.L.P. Wolmarans.
4. The Executive Commission instruct the Faith and Order Committee to convene conferences in various geographical areas where members of the UPCSA may debate some or all of the issues raised in the papers written by Rev Prof J.L.P. Wolmarans and Liberal Theology in general and submit a report to the 2018 General Assembly of the outcomes.
5. The Executive Commission dissolve the Committee with thanks.

MINISTRY

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

FORMS OF MINISTRY

A task team on forms of ministry was appointed by the Ministry Committee (MinComm) of General Assembly (GA) in December 2016. This was in response to decisions taken at the 2016 General Assembly concerning proposals pertaining to new forms of ministry, including the request for flexibility concerning certain procedures for selection and admission into ministry in the UPCSA.

Considerable work has already been done by the GA Mission & Discipleship Committee. Based on this work, the Task Team on Forms of Ministry understands the MinComm responsibilities to be:

1. Discernment Conference (previously Selection Conference): Broadening of candidates selected to allow for the full APEST (apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher) range of spiritual gifts with the emphasis on the minister as a facilitator, equipping and empowering the congregation for ministry, as well as making provision for bi-vocational ministry.
2. Developing and implementing acceptable selection and training for the new forms of ministry by
 - Selecting/discerning candidates using modified criteria & procedures to facilitate the change
 - Oversight of academic & practical training, possibly in parallel, & the spiritual formation of candidates to ordination
 - Determining appropriate courses to suit the gifting of each candidate, which may call for evaluation of existing courses & initiating new programmes as well as placement for practical experience to be obtained
 - Exercising flexibility regarding the usual processes for entry into the ministry in the UPCSA and “acceptance of those who have already planted churches”
 - Allowing for bi-vocational Fellowship of Vocation, probation and ordination
 - Proposing new guidelines for the Manual for new forms of ministry, new discernment/selection criteria, & new training & probationary requirements.
3. Receiving applications from ordained ministers from other denominations to be admitted to the UPCSA, allowing for greater flexibility in our internal processes, & bringing proposals to GA enabling the transfer of ministers.

Because of the overlap of responsibilities associated with new forms of ministry, the task team has several members external to MinComm, including three from Mission and Discipleship (MaD). Members of the team include: Pat Baxter (Ministry Secretary), Stewart Gordon (a bi-vocational minister with ACTS, a Fresh Expression of the Church), Glynis Goyns (MinComm, facilitating the task team), Theo Groeneveld (MaD), Chris Judelsohn (MaD), Vusi Mabo (MinComm), Mamolotje Magagane (Secretary), Lentikile Mashoko (MaD), Vuyani Vellem (MinComm & University of Pretoria).

At the time of writing, the task team had met three times, in February, March and May 2017. The expectation was to bring recommendations to MinComm for inclusion in its report to ExCo on practical action pertaining to training and ministerial formation with reference to the 2016 GA decisions.

Focus areas identified for attention include:

- To inform and further motivate Presbyteries to take action regarding
 - Broadening the approach to Fellowship of Vocation to cater for new forms of ministry
 - Accepting and making provision for bi-vocational ministry
 - Understanding and accepting the new role of the Minister in facilitating ministry by members of the congregation and the importance of the Order of Lay Ministries (OLM) in this regard.
- To encourage GA MinComm to
 - Broaden the criteria for the Call Discernment Conference to allow for alternative forms of ministry and full APEST (apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher) range of spiritual gifts
 - Make provision for bi-vocational FoV, probation and ordination, and encourage congregations to consider this approach to ministry
 - Evaluate the curricula offered by tertiary institutions with specific reference to new forms of ministry, especially the emphasis on equipping the congregation for ministry
 - Make provision for academic and practical training in parallel to cater for bi-vocational ministry
 - Organise a workshop of theologians in the second half of 2017 on new forms of ministry. Funding is being secured for this event. The purpose is to provide sound theology to underpin the proposed changes in forms of ministry, and identify key issues and their implications from a broad Reformed perspective. The ultimate outcome will be a theological document identifying required changes in thinking and action. This will be achieved in phases, with the initial workshop being the first phase. Following the initial workshop, there will be a call for papers to address the crucial issues identified. Priority & Resources will then be asked if these papers could be presented at the Ministers’ Conference next year for further discussion and action. An external facilitator will be used for the workshop with ten key participants from the UPCSA at a two-day workshop. The facilitator will be briefed about proposed changes in forms of ministry in the UPCSA and our priority to shift from maintenance to

mission. A broad framework will be adopted rather than a fixed programme to allow “freedom of movement” depending on the content of discussions.
The Task Team sees this very much as still a work in progress.

CALL DISCERNMENT

Call Discernment Conference, 1st - 4th June, 2017

The Ministry Committee met at Lumko Conference Centre in Johannesburg on the 1st to the 4th June 2017, to discern the call of 21 candidates. The Committee decided that 12 of the applicants become students for the ministry from 1 January 2018. 2 candidates would be student/probationer subject to successful completion of studies at the end of 2017; the students will enter probation in January 2018. 6 applicants would begin probation in January 2018. 1 candidate was deferred.

The list of the candidates to go ahead in the discerning of the call is as follows:

	<i>NAME</i>	<i>COMMENT</i>
8	Ajapa, Norest	Student
5	Gordon, Amber-Leigh	Student
11	Masaraure, Mirriam	Student
7	Maselesele, Lusani M	Student
2	Mata, Eric M	Student
9	Mbedzi, Nduvho I	Student
10	Mkandwini, Tebogo P	Student
6	Mzumara, Edgar	Student
12	Nyawo, Andile	Student
3	Piroe, Matshediso A	Student
4	Rakoma, Caroline	Student
1	Swartz, Ivor D	Student
13	Mzalisi, Nomxolisi G	Student/ Probationer
14	Sotashe, Zukisani S	Student/Probationer/bi-vocational probationer
19	Dube, Zorodzai	Bi-vocational Probationer
15	Erasmus, Christel	Probationer
20	Letuka, Victor	Bi-vocational Probationer
18	Moletsane, Pitso	Probationer
16	Ntshona, Victor M	Probationer
17	Snyders, Andrew N	Probationer

LOVEMORE HOUSE IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

In response to a request from the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, the Sedibeng Trust made available an amount of R300, 000 for the renovation of Lovemore House in Harare. The vision for this project was to turn Lovemore House into a place of residence for students studying at UTC and as a conference venue. However the hope for use by other (non UPCS) students has not materialised and thus the financial sustainability of Lovemore House has been in jeopardy. This led to the Ministry Committee’s decision to move the UPCS official students to reside at the College. The Presbytery of Zimbabwe is looking into alternative uses for the house.

PROBATIONERS

Cross-Cultural Probationer experiences

The practice of organising for Probationers to spend a month of their year of probation in a context that is entirely different (e.g. country, culture) is to continue. However such exchanges are not possible for all Probationers due to domestic and other constraints. Nevertheless those that have experienced such an exchange have benefitted greatly from it.

Church of Scotland Probationer Exchange

For the past number of years 2 Probationers from Scotland have been invited to share the August PAT Conference and then a week or two in one of the UPCS congregations. Likewise 2 UPCS Probationers have been invited to Scotland for similar experience. All those who have gone through this experience have indicated how beneficial it has been for them. Unfortunately the two UPCS Probationers, who were Zimbabwean citizens selected to visit Scotland in 2017 were both refused visas by the British Embassy. Under such circumstances the viability of this exchange is being re-examined by the Ministry Committee.

REVIEW OF CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

The General Assembly 2016 instructed the Ministry Committee to review and report to the 2017 Executive Commission

1. All current recognised institutions and
2. Any other theological institutions recommended by Presbyteries and submitted to the Ministry Committee by December 2016.

To date, the Ministry Committee has received input from only 2 Presbyteries. In an effort to address the instruction by the General Assembly, the Ministry Committee plans to hold a theological conference in which 2 people per Presbytery will be invited to participate. Progress will be reported at the 2018 General Assembly. Funds will need to be made available for this event.

INEQUALITIES WITHIN THE UPCSA

The Ministry Committee acknowledges that the UPCSA as a whole operates in many ways which have caused many people to some extent, hurt and injustices. In an attempt to address this concern, the Committee presents a working document for the UPCSA to engage and respond so that a final report on inequalities in the UPCSA can be presented at the 2018 General Assembly. See document attached as Appendix A.

ADMISSION AND READMISSION

The General Assembly requested the Ministry Committee to journey with Rev. Patrick Mafa and Rev. Simiso Mncwabe: The Ministry Committee met with both candidates.

Rev P. Mafa

The Committee met with Rev. Patrick Mafa at St. Mungo's United Church on the 4th May 2017. The Ministry Committee recommends that the matter of the Rev Mafa be referred to the Presbytery of Amathole, for assistance with clarifying issues raised at the meeting. The Ministry Secretary will assist the Presbytery on this matter.

Rev S.G. Mncwabe

The Ministry Committee met with Rev. Simiso Mncwabe at Central Office on the 9th May 2017 as part of journeying with him. The Ministry Committee recommends that the matter of the Rev S. Mncwabe be referred to the Presbytery of Western Cape, for assistance with clarifying issues raised at the meeting. The Ministry Secretary will assist the Presbytery on this matter.

Rev S.L. Molokoane

The Ministry Committee received a positive report from the Presbytery of Highveld where the Rev Molokoane is serving at Ebenezer congregation (Vosloorus) under the mentorship of the Rev SP Molepo. The Committee recommends that Rev. Molokoane be fully admitted into the UPCSA ministry.

Rev M. Njeza

The Ministry Committee received a positive report from the Presbytery of Highveld on the supervision and mentorship of the Rev Malinge Njeza under the Rev Bosiki. The Committee recommends that Rev. M. Malinge Njeza be fully admitted into the UPCSA ministry.

SECONDMENT

Rev M. Brand

The Ministry Committee received positive recommendation and request for the secondment of the Rev. Marius Brand as Regional Director at Biblica – International Bible Society. The Ministry Committee supports and recommends the request to the Executive Commission.

Rev M. Mohapi's

The Presbytery of Tshwane notified the Ministry Committee that the Rev. Mantsi Mohapi is retiring from the SANDF on 31 December 2017. The Ministry Committee therefore noted that the secondment to the SANDF falls away upon retirement.

Rev A. Akih

The Committee received a request for extension of the Rev Abraham Akih's secondment by another year. The Committee was also informed that the Rev Akih's residence permit was coming to an end with his completion of his Doctorate studies at Pretoria. The Committee therefore decided to recommend that Rev. Akih's secondment be renewed subject to his acquiring the necessary papers for his legal stay in South Africa, by the time the Executive Commission meets in July.

REV ME RAMULONDI CONVENER

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the supplementary report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that the Ministry Committee is in the process of developing materials for Presbyteries on how to make a provision for bi-vocational ministry in the UPCSA.
3. The Executive Commission instructs the Ministry Committee to hold a conference to work out the process to be followed in reviewing the current and recommended theological institutions and report to 2018 General Assembly.
4. The Executive instructs the Finance Committee to make funds available for the Theological review conference.
5. The Executive Commission notes that the Ministry Committee is working on liaising with the Manual Committee regarding policies and processes to be included on Bi-Vocational Ministry.
6. The Executive Commission receives the Call Discernment Conference decisions of potential candidates for the Ministry as outlined in the body of the report.
7. The Executive Commission approves a workshop of theologians to start the process of fleshing out an undergirding theology for this new approach (Bio-Vocational Ministry) to the ministry.
8. The Executive Commission adopts the draft document on Ethos, Structure and Resources, the Impact of Inequalities on Decision Making within the UPCSA working document and sends it to Presbyteries for discussion and send their input to the Ministry Committee by the 31st January 2018.
9. The Executive Commission agrees that the matter of readmission of the Rev Patrick Mafa be referred back to the Presbytery of Amathole for further consideration.
10. The Executive Commission agrees that the matter of readmission of the Rev Simiso Mncwabe be referred back to the Presbytery of Western Cape for further consideration.
11. The Executive Commission fully admits the Rev S. Molokoane as a minister of Word and Sacrament in the UPCSA.
12. The Executive Commission fully admits Rev. M. Njeza into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the UPCSA.
13. The Executive Commission agrees to second the Rev. M. Brand to the post of Regional Director at Biblica – International Bible Society.
14. The Executive Commission notes that the secondment of the Rev. M. Mohapi lapses at the time of his retirement from the SANDF in December 2017.
15. The Executive Commission notes that the secondment of the Rev Akih to the UPCSA expires at the end of July 2017.

APPENDIX A MINISTRY SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT 2017

Ethos, Structure and Resources: The Impact of Inequalities on Decision Making in the UPCSA

Second Draft

VS Vellem

Abstract

This paper is intended for discussion. It is an on-going reflection of the impact of inequalities and decision-making in the UPCSA with a view to proposing alternative ways of transforming our ethos, structures and the sharing of resources in our denomination. The discussion for the development of this paper was triggered by a Case that truly featured in the proceedings of the Ministry and Mission Committee. At the centre of this argument presented here is that decisions that ignore the other validate the link between ignorance and racism. For decisions to be legitimate, the paper argues, two important sides of legitimation are necessary, namely consenting and consensing. The concept of legitimacy is used to illustrate the problem. This paper is not a polemic against whites in the UPCSA but whiteness at least especially in decision-making.

Key Words

It might help for the reader to identify key words as they go through this paper so as to deepen and question the assumptions of the paper. More importantly, this exercise might help for the reader to grasp the argument more deeply so as to engage it more constructively:

- **Consenting**
- **Consensing**
- **Culture**
- **Decision-making**
- **Dismembering**
- **Ethos**
- **Ignorance**
- **Legitimacy**
- **Resources**
- **Whiteness**

1. Introduction

We cannot go on like this!

Our faith is at stake if matters of ethos, structure and resources impact our decision making and thus our participation in dignifying decision making processes in our denomination in the manner it does.

The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) is a product of the union of Presbyterian streams that were separated for almost over a century due to the repugnant history of racism, colonialism, economic exclusion, sexism, masochism and patriarchy, among others. It is difficult to discuss colonialism, even ecclesiology without all these constructs of modernity that continue to bedevil human relations and the whole of creation today. In fact, racism is constitutive of modernity, this paper assumes. It is thus incredibly difficult for us to leave out constructs of modernity that are prevalent in our denomination without reflecting on their racial implications for justice.

The history of the relationship of the church with colonialism and modernity and its impact, includes experiences in sub-Saharan Africa if not Africa as a whole, India, the Caribbean, Latin America and others—what has now become dubbed as the Global South. This is a history of conquest, colonialism and Christianization whose effects remain in place long after the independence or better, political liberation of previously colonized countries. There are many works that have been published in this regard. Importantly, this history is assumed, to reiterate, as a starting point of what follows in the discussion of this document, more specifically focusing on the stubbornness of the racist logic that is hidden in the ethos, culture, structures, resource distribution and decision making within the UPCSA. Most of the efforts that have been adopted in the UPCSA in the last few years seem to be tarnished by their propensity to re-colonize rather than decolonize the denomination in her pursuit for justice and reconciliation.

This paper presents a background to the origins of this debate, expands on what and how the problem of the link between *ignorance* and racism could be understood, with an illustration and a brief proposal for a route to be taken to measure the depth of this challenge in our denomination.

Background

The proposal to draft this paper arose when the Ministry Committee was discussing an application for secondment by one of our ministers who had just been appointed as a Chaplain in the South African Police Service (SAPS). Most of the Committee members questioned the merits of this application on the grounds that the applicant had not obtained permission from the Ministry Committee to apply for the said position. In addition, the members argued, the applicant

did not indicate his intent to apply for the position of Chaplaincy in the SAPS. These arguments were rightly based on the dictates of the *Manual of Faith and Order* of the UPCSA. There should be many other examples that the reader may think about which are based on the prescripts of our Law in the UPCSA, but are often found wanting in their propensity to perpetuate injustices. The paper focuses on the layers, notions and conceptions at play when decisions are taken.

Let us return to the case of the application for Chaplaincy cited above. What was worrying though in the discussion of this application was that most of the Committee members who were likely to propose the turning down of the application did not even *know* the congregation the applicant was serving. Remember knowing is an involved subject. They did not have a picture or imagination of the congregation at all.

None ever saw the congregation before. None had ever had the experience of serving in a congregation whose material conditions, at least according to those who knew this particular congregation, were simply not favourable for full time ministry, let alone the geographical location of this congregation which defines the larger community and social context in which the applicant is currently serving. Yet these members were ready to decide! They were ready to take a decision out of *ignorance*, to apply the Manual of Faith and Order out of *ignorance* and similarly the tools of our decision making in the Committee out of the *ignorance* of the context, material conditions, experience and location of the said congregation including the minister, another human being in our denomination. What then is the problem here?

The Problem

There are serious and deep questions that arise from the context outlined above. The ethical questions even much deeper! For example, ethical decisions might require some of these criteria:

- Awareness of the fundamental beliefs of others
- Awareness of the world and how others live in it,
- The formulation of these beliefs in a precise and systematic way,
- To provide reasoned arguments for their truth against one's truths AND
- Awareness about how we value a system of values different from ours.

Essentially, how one lives with or without others is important when decisions that impact on other people's lives are taken. Departing from this understanding of important and necessary criteria needed for our decision-making let us attempt to pose a few questions that are related to this case:

- How can a decision that is taken out of the *ignorance* of the context, location, experience and material conditions of a congregation and another human being, a colleague for that matter, be just?
- What could be the danger of a procedurally correct decision taken out of the *ignorance* of the applicant's personal conditions?
- Could there be some who are privileged to decide about others despite their *ignorance* of others?
- Why are some *ignorant* about the material conditions of others and yet decide the fate of others?

If we put the matter broadly, the question is: how does one who *ignores* the fundamental, beliefs, the world, the lived experiences and the truth references of the other decide for the other? This is a huge ethical question.

What, when, how, who, and why we decide should be the key questions we pose for our decision making. There are many questions that could be framed out of this case, namely the case of Chaplaincy above, importantly such questions would speak to the dynamics of decision making we seek to examine in this discussion. The pain is nonetheless immeasurable if racial dynamics are part of this problem. Unfortunately in most instances racism plays a key role sometimes unconsciously so as it is an inherent part of the logic of our systems, ethos and culture as a denomination. To explain a bit, the *fundamental beliefs*, the *world* of the UPCSA, the *formulation of these beliefs* in the UPCSA and the *value systems* are white and European modernist in origin infused with a history of colonization and the conquest of others.

So, could there be a link between racism and *ignorance* in decision making? If there is a link, how does this relationship between racism and *ignorance* play itself out in perpetuating inequalities in our denomination? Could there be a link between economic exclusion and *ignorance* in decision making? Is there ultimately a link between *ignorance* and theology? What happens when *ignorance* becomes structural? We now should realize that *ignorance* here is used as a motif to examine our ethos, structures and resources in our denomination. No harm is intended against anyone as an individual, but the structural expression of *ignorance* and its relationship with racism in our denomination.

Let us remember that it is this *ignorance* that became the subject of critical race analysis by one of the doyens of Reformed faith in South Africa, Allan Boesak, through the prism of pseudo-innocence. *Pseudo-innocence* is like childishness in contrast with child-likeness as intended even by Jesus in the Gospels, that the Kingdom of His Father for those who are "like these" is "theirs" — the children. In his book, *Farewell to Innocence* Boesak argues that ignorance about the conditions of racial conflict in South Africa is fraught with *pseudo-innocence*. In other words, one cannot claim any longer that he/she does not know about the harrowing violent conditions of oppression, exclusion, and sexism in South African then and now. This is not true only in South Africa, but also in Zimbabwe and Zambia and now in the whole world today. To make such a claim is to be 'childish.' We need therefore to bid farewell to childishness. Furthermore, one cannot be *ignorant* to the victims that have become conditioned to their inferiority and

thus participate willingly in their own oppression and subjugation by those who regard themselves as superior. Many black Africans, in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe have accepted that they are inferior and equally play a fundamental role in perpetuating racial logic in our denomination. This in a nutshell is the argument presented by Allan Boesak in this book. In Zambia, this notion by Boesak is applicable to what Nalwamba says: “Men left their villages in their droves to go to the Copperbelt in search of paid work. They were employed to undertake life-threatening jobs in the mining industry, while skilled workforce was ‘imported’ from Europe.”¹ Some may have accepted that they are not skilled and may not be as skilled as their white counterparts. To ignore this history and its realities is not only childish but racist; an argument based on this notion by Boesak could be made.

In 2016, at the commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre, Klippiess Kritzinger appropriates the same thesis postulated by Allan Boesak almost forty years ago. In the context of racism and its epiphanies in post 1994 South Africa, the Black Bodies in the United States of America with Donald Trump symbolising the fascist nature of racism in the twenty first century, Kritzinger’s paper is a must-read. Klippiess Kritzinger, to reiterate, employs Boesak’s thesis, “Farewell to innocence” and adds, “Farewell to ignorance,” and “Farewell to arrogance” too if we are to succeed in dealing with “deep-seated attitudes and approaches that keep on bedevilling relationships between black and white people in this country.”² Applied for our context in the UPCSA, our decision making processes if justice is to be attained in our praxis as the denomination should bid farewell to:

- Innocence or pseudo-innocence,
- Ignorance And
- Arrogance.

One more point needs to be made about the person Kritzinger is responding to in the paper he read at Sharpeville. The pastor who apparently made what others regard as racist remarks was preaching in a church in Sandton. We all know that Sandton is among the wealthiest suburbs of South Africa, a stone’s throw away from Alexander Township.

While there are blacks who live in Sandton³, as ‘recognized’ residents of this suburb that they have become “members” of the Sandton community is seriously and deeply arguable. One best example we can give is that in our transnationality as a denomination, are our brothers and sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe only ‘recognized’ or ‘full’ members of the UPCSA. In other words, the presence of blacks in Committees of the General Assembly of the UPCSA does not and cannot be equated with black “membership” of those Committees or decision making structures, even the denomination itself. More importantly, in our denominational geography where there is no relationship between black and white congregations possibly exemplifying a just relationship between the two, this link could be established through this thesis—a congregation in Sandton can exist by keeping the other one in Alexander.

This relationship is maintained by congregations in ‘Sandton’ either being *innocent*, *ignorant* or even *arrogant* about the conditions of congregations in ‘Alexander.’ This could be true of the entire denomination, especially our transnationality as stated already. So the presence of blacks in the UPCSA is not at all a signature of their membership despite their considerable ‘recognition’ in the denomination. They are not citizens, they are not members yet for as long as racism is given a facade of *innocence*, *ignored*, or *arrogated* at least. So membership in the denomination is problematic in a denomination whose inequalities are as unethically pronounced as they currently are in the UPCSA. We cannot continue to *dis-member* others and assume that our decisions can stand any ethical scrutiny. There are layers that conceal the *dismembering* of others which cannot be left untouched.

One of the most regrettable of these layers in our history, difficult to avoid in our view for any possible comprehensive solution for our future especially in South Africa, Africa and ultimately for humanity as a whole, is the role of faith in the justificatory logic of racial, cultural and economic exclusion. It is impossible to imagine a space freed of this logic in our history, therefore if in other spheres of our lives there are deliberate attempts at dealing with this past, faith based organizations also need to be deliberate in their own attempts intended to deal with this quagmire. To proceed without doing anything that demonstrates our genuine commitment to freeing ourselves as a denomination from this history is not just an omission, but an *ignorant*, pseudo-innocent if not *arrogant* perpetuation of this history of racial and class inequality.

In our structures of decision making, especially in a Committee such as this one, which deals with what is at the core of our existence, ministry, we cannot avoid the implications of our history if the Committee is to be seen to deliver justice. In other words, there is a need for us to confront *whiteness* in our denomination and decision-makings processes, for it is *whiteness* that conceals the immense challenges we face in our denomination. In her book, Ferial

¹ Kuzipa Nalwanba, ...175

² See VS Velleem “Cracking the Skull of Racism in South Africa Post 1994” 2017, up-coming

³ While we literally have congregations in Sandton and Alexander, the reader should imagine the city-township or city-rural dualities of the geography of the UPCSA and the consequences of such a geography. This is but one structure that exemplifies the inherent modernist and thus inherently racist structures of our denomination.

Haffajee, with its controversial title, “one of the most dumb-arsed questions possible”⁴ she says about it herself: *What if there were no Whites in South Africa*, describes *whiteness* in relation to privilege in the following manner:

Whiteness is the study of a system of privilege in which white people are held to be the centre of gaze. It is, I find, an ideology and school of thought that has come to surpass non-racialism as a prism through which to understand contemporary South Africa.⁵

The symptoms of whiteness are *innocence*, *ignorance* and *arrogance* among others as shown in the case cited as a trigger of this paper and thus our discussion. How does one participate in a decision that affects one’s life when one is *ignorant* about the layers and context that influences the other’s decision-making if it is not simply *arrogance*? In addition to the layers of our history of the economics of extraction in South Africa and Zambia too, and our continent as a whole, the dominant rationality of politics and economics which in the past has shown no respect for human relations, has today, moved beyond the commodification of human relations to the commodification of the whole of creation and the cosmos. In other words if the anatomy of political and economic institutions today is conjured on imaginaries that have no regard for life, the church, as an institution that functions in the sphere of faith cannot proceed with our inattentiveness to the spirituality driven by these institutions which permeates the whole of life. If racism tarnished our relationship as humans, even our relationship with the whole of creation is tarnished by what others have dubbed as environmental racism. The combination of our history of inequality with the current context in which the institutionalization of a life killing spirituality poses a huge challenge to our faith and its models expressed in our theology as a whole and thus decision making and governance is a sign of our time. We cannot live like this!

This section prolongs the discussion of what the problem is, in other words, what the ethical and theological questions posed by the case cited are. Pseudo-innocence today manifests as *innocent ignorance* with extreme forms of white *arrogance* concealed through the sophistication of structures of management, politics and economics and the maintenance of an ethos that sustains *whiteness* or white privilege. Justified by faith the dangers of this ethos are too ghastly to contemplate. It is our duty and calling to identify practices that seem *innocent* and perpetuate the *ignorance* of the other and surely, to contend with the recognition of blacks while they are kept not as members in the denomination and its structures of decision making. Our theology, challenged by our history is in addition, devastatingly challenged by the current context of the world. Our ethical challenge is thus unimaginably and unutterably enormous. In taking decisions in a Committee such as this one, the following are underlying ethical questions:

- How am I perpetuating the justificatory logic of racial exclusion through my faith conviction?
- How am I willingly participating in the justificatory logic of racial exclusion through my faith conviction?
- How am I making a thing (commodity) out of another?
- How am I accepting to be a thing for another?
- What contribution do I make in an ethos of “I am because you are not?”

No matter how much we could try to justify, avoid or *ignore*, there is a constant danger every time, posed by a person who sits next to me in a Committee, Council or Conference. This danger is that this person next to me is *a thing because I am*. The language of this person next to me is a thing because mine is the language. The fundamental belief of this person are merely things exotic because mine the most fundamental. The world of the other is a thing that does not exist because only my world exists and so forth. The following subsection deepens our grasp of the problem by employing the notion of *legitimacy*.

The Illustration of the Problem

The Ministry Committee of the General Assembly of the UPSCA is a legitimate structure, functioning with a mandate, tools and rules legitimately legislated by the General Assembly whose function is indeed to legislate. These tools of decision-making, the *Manual of Faith and Order*, the dominant theology of the denomination, the mandate and structure of the Ministry Committee, as legitimate categories create the impression that our decisions are just and legitimate. A deeper examination of the concept of legitimation nonetheless reveals that there could be other aspects we are *ignoring*.

Legitimacy at least has two prongs: *consenting* and *consensing*.⁶ Consenting mostly has to do with the legal processes that are followed for a decision to be taken. In other words, aspects that respond to the legalities of decision-making or its processes, i.e. hard questions such as the law, or the tools of decision making require to be legalized for a decision to be legitimate. *Consensing* on the other hand refers to the symbolic requirements of the processes of decision making, the ‘software’ of decision making. Both these prongs are indispensable for to legitimate a decision.

⁴ Haffajee, *What if* p33.

⁵ Haffajee, *What is*, pp 14-15.

⁶ See Vuyani Vellem,

There is a sense in which one must comprehend and equally *trust* a decision that is taken at any given moment. The imbalance between consenting and *consensing* in taking decisions de-legitimizes a decision.

While the tools we have in order to legalize the decision making processes in our denomination are legitimate, they cannot be fully legitimate if there is no trustworthy process of *consensing* in our decision making processes. The challenges of *ignorance*, *innocence* and *arrogance*, linked to the “trust” we put on the legal instruments of our decision making rupture the equilibrium between *consenting* and *consensing*, thus the ultimate legitimacy of our decision making. Consensing implies that there is a role for decision making to find rootage, “rootedness” in the intellectual, cultural and ideological understanding of black African people who are victims of a history that excluded and oppressed them, justified by faith. Legal or formal decisions that are detached from the rootedness of the people, or better, decisions that are ignorantly, pseudo-innocently and arrogantly detached from the culture, intellectual and ideological roots of the other cannot be ethically legitimate. The implementation of a decision that lacks any balance between *consenting* and *consensing* is nothing but violence. We thus can safely conclude that the white power structure which is precisely an edifice made up of structural ignorance that has become institutionalized, concealed in decisions arrived at through *consenting* could be even more hazardous when sustained through prayer.

Measuring the Impact of Inequalities

If the thesis explained and whose problem statement is illustrated so far were to be measured, a number of case studies could be selected. In this paper, the intention is more on the development of an approach that could be used to unpack the impact the inequalities have on our decision making processes. Decision making requires a pronounced attempt at dealing with all the symptoms of *whiteness*: *privilege*, *ignorance*, *innocence* and *arrogance* at least. Furthermore, the test of the legitimacy of our decision making is not only the formal and legal processes of our decision making processes but also the prong of *consensing*. As already implied in this paper so far, the symptoms and categories of decision-making discussed and used as measuring tools of the impact of decision making, designate decision making as a dismembering process in the UPCS. Other categories could be used, and the development of alternative proposals in underway.

Think about the Consensus Decision-making process in the UPCS. In what way does it colonize consensus as part of the ethic and world of African polity? Think of the Associations in the UPCS. In what way do they simply symbolize that African values, beliefs, culture are merely recognised but not fully incorporated in what we think the Church is today? Think about women. In what way are women simply ignored in our denomination? This about stipends that unequal in the denomination, can we still *ignore* them? Think about the youth and many other examples that are lived experiences of others that simply feature nowhere because they are *ignored*. If these examples are studied and deepened more, a process that is currently underway

Un-concluding Remarks

Is this paper an offensive against white people? Not by any means but for some it might sound that way. Forgive the write if that is the case. The problem of racism is fought by all races as is the case in the history of our land. If this paper succeeds to make you grasp structure, ethos and culture as related to racism, then we are succeeding in this conversation. This paper is for reading and critical engagement by the denomination. It argued that in decision making, there are many layers which cannot be evaded being the link between ignorance and racism as demonstrated by the case cited in this paper. The thesis of pseudo-innocence has been deployed to explain how structural *ignorance* and *arrogance*, some of the symptoms of *whiteness*, perpetuates toxic relations between black and white. The justification of this ethos by faith is even a much more vexing question for our times. Decisions that dismember others in a denomination that is already as glaringly unequal as ours cannot be theologically and ethically sustained. We need to urgently deal with challenges of legitimacy to free our decisions from violence and the dismembering of others.

CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS

Supplementary report to the Executive Commission 2017

Introduction

This supplementary report is intended to bring to the attention of the Executive Commission some developments which took place since the submission of the report to the Clerk of the General Assembly.

Spiritual Imbizo

For some time, the Committee identified the need for the associations to work together on issues of moral and spiritual upliftment. The Committee planned to bring all the associations under one roof for praise and worship. The aim was to create a platform for the Presbyterians to worship together and celebrate each other, and therefore work towards the realisation of the vision of the UPCSA "to be a reconciled community of Christians exercising a prophetic witness to Christ". The Committee plans to take this idea to Presbyteries and Synod to have Imbizo's at their levels as well, as it is understood that many people cannot make it to a denominational central venue. The aim is to uplift spirituality throughout the UPCSA.

By the grace of God, the Imbizo that had been planned for a long time was successfully held at St Mark's Presbyterian, Daveyton within the Presbytery of the Highveld on 3-4 June 2017. The programme was designed in such a way that there would be no discussions and stiff business that causes anxiety, frustration and depression, but to focus on praise and worship. All the associations supported the call and attended the Imbizo. There were people from a good number of Presbyteries.

The success of this spiritual Imbizo demonstrated that **ALL** our associations are devoted in seeking unity and peace in our Denomination. The members that attended were commended for their commitment and the sacrifices they made for the success of the event. As envisaged, and due to financial constraints, it was not possible for many other people to attend. Hence, a call is made to the Presbyteries to hold Imbizo's towards spiritual upliftment and promotion of this spirit of unity and peace

The Committee wishes to express appreciation to the Executive Committees of all Associations and ministers for their cooperation. The Committee also thanks the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Central Office staff for the support, especially Joan for her zeal to assist when asked.

THE REV M.L. MSHUMPELA
CONVENER

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that the Spiritual Imbizo was successfully held at St Mark's Presbyterian, Daveyton within the Presbytery of the Highveld on 3-4 June 2017.
3. The Executive Committee commends the Associations and the ministers that attended the Imbizo.
4. The Executive Commission encourages Presbyteries to hold the Spiritual Imbizo's.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATIONAL FUND

Supplementary Report to Executive Commission 2017

The past year has seen changes in the oversight of the PEF and the new team is still settling into a routine.

In September, 2016 the Education and Training Committee took the decision to disband the committee / task team which had overseen the work of the PEF since before the restructuring of GA committees. A new task team consisting of two members of the Education and Training Committee was appointed.

The old Task team had met in August, 2016, scheduling the next meeting for November, 2016.

The scheduled November meeting of the PEF was postponed since it would now also be a farewell to the outgoing members, not all of whom were available in November. The meeting was held in February and the Convener of the Education and Training Committee, who had herself served on the PEF task team, thanked the following for their service to the PEF over many years: Rev TP Letsheleha (Co-ordinator of the task team), Rev PEC Lediga, Mrs T Lediga, Mrs N Doyoyo and Mrs W Eyre.

The new Task Team is made up of the Revs A Sontange and D Bower, with Ms M Mosotho as alternate.

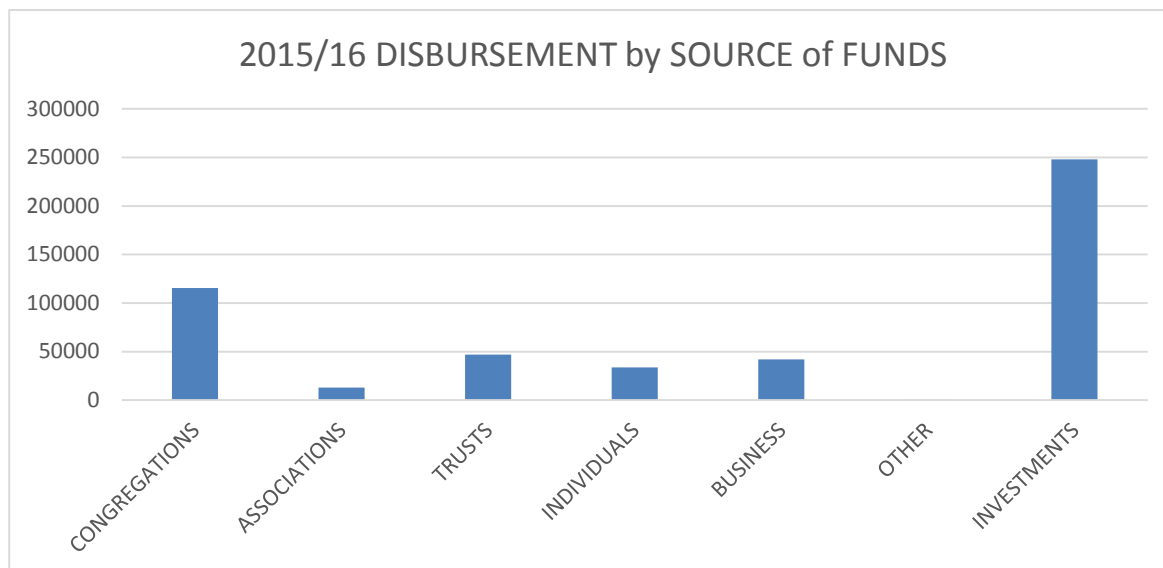
The year July, 2015 to June, 2016 saw the largest amount disbursed by the PEF in the last seven years, a step in the right direction towards making awards that really make an impact in the lives of the recipients.

Even so the average over the 87 recipients was just R 5 743.57 per recipient, which is still a long way from being ideal, especially since the number of applicants requesting assistance with post matric study continues to increase, and college / university study costs are significantly higher than those of secondary schooling.

The following awards were made between July, 2015 and June, 2016.

AWARDS MADE FOR THE PERIOD JULY, 2015 to JUNE, 2016							
		SCHOOL		UNIV/COLL		TOTAL	
COUNTRY	PRESBYTERY	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.
		IN RANDS		IN RANDS		IN RANDS	
SOUTH AFRICA	AMATHOLE	1 750.00	1	71 590.31	10	73 340.31	11
	CENTRAL CAPE	49 525.00	10	19 250.00	3	68 775.00	13
	DRAKENSBERG	3 000.00	1	13 000.00	2	16 000.00	3
	EAST GRIQUALAND						0
	eGOLI	35 525.00	9	38 100.00	7	73 625.00	16
	eTHEKWINI	4 200.00	2	3 500.00	1	7 700.00	3
	FREE STATE	10 090.00	2	6 250.00	2	16 340.00	4
	HIGHVELD	9 260.00	3			9 260.00	3
	LEKOA			16 000.00	2	16 000.00	2
	LIMPOPO	4 000.00	1	25 000.00	2	29 000.00	3
	MTHATHA	5 000.00	1			5 000.00	1
	SOUTHERN CAPE REGIONAL COMMISSION	6 500.00	1			6 500.00	1
	TRANSKEI			3 000.00	1	3 000.00	1
	TSHWANE			26 500.00	3	26 500.00	3
	uTHUKELA						0
	WESTERN CAPE	11 750.00	6	38 440.00	7	50 190.00	13
SUBTOTAL for RSA		140 600.00	37	260 630.31	40	401 230.31	77
ZAMBIA	COPPERBELT						
	M'CHINGA						
	MUNALI						
ZIMBABWE	ZIMBABWE	34 707.96	5	63 752.34	5	98 460.30	10
SUBTOTAL: ZAMBIA and ZIMBABWE		34 707.96	5	63 752.34	5	98 460.30	10
TOTAL for ALL PRESBYTERIES		175 307.96	42	324 382.65	45	499 690.61	87

The following table shows the source of the funds which were disbursed in the past financial year.



Donation income received from congregations has dropped since the high of 2012 when the Fund celebrated its 40th anniversary, and is currently under 25% of the total disbursed. We trust that this trend will change in the current financial year and appeal to all congregations to contribute on a regular basis. The following is a summary of all donations received since 2010 and is followed by a detailed list of donations received in 2015/16.

PEF: DONATIONS RECEIVED as at 30 June, 2016 by Presbytery												
All amounts are shown in Rands. The number of congregations, associations, etc is shown in the column to the right of the amount.												
PRESBYTERIES	2010		2011		TOTAL Jan 2012- June 2013		TOTAL July 2013- June 2014		TOTAL July 2014- June 2015		TOTAL July 2015- June 2016	
	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.
AMATHOLE	7 233.41	3	9 702.00	9	18 463.82	9	1 529.00	2	14 994.00	7	6 000.00	1
CENTRAL CAPE	4 482.71	5	4 847.00	7	11 898.70	11	10 780.30	8	10 386.20	6	7 617.00	8
DRAKENSBERG					4 400.00	3	2 437.00	1	933.00	1	2 370.00	2
EAST GRIQUALAND							250.00	1			500.00	1
eGOLI	14 315.00	3	24 230.00	9	47 339.81	9	26 405.00	5	37 196.20	7	22 434.10	6
eTHEKWINI	2 000.00	1	6 195.00	4	1 865.00	3	6 500.00	3	4 500.00	3	3 200.00	2
FREE STATE			762.00	2	370.00	1	2 979.00	4	2 402.00	3	3 573.60	2
HIGHVELD	6 000.00	1	8 831.05	4	10 815.00	8	14 994.90	3	7 790.00	4	7 584.80	3
LEKOA					1 240.00	1	1 200.00	1	1 594.00	2	2 472.70	3
LIMPOPO	10 542.50	15	1 360.00	1	6 795.00	8	6 500.00	11	7 100.00	10	5 554.20	6
MTHATHA	5 600.00	14	6 000.00	15	12 000.00	15	6 000.00	15	6 000.00	15	6 400.00	16
SOUTHERN CAPE REGIONAL COMM			879.00	1	2 658.00	2	2 098.50	3	2 360.00	2	3 170.00	4
TRANSKEI	8 929.20	17	11 530.35	18	20 157.00	20	200.00	1	23 404.60	20	11 150.50	19
TSHWANE	6 445.00	5	12 053.45	10	23 008.15	11	11 157.55	6	5 446.30	6	20 886.30	5
uTHUKELA			310.00	1	6 906.00	3	6 040.00	2	2 570.00	2	2 200.00	1
WESTERN CAPE	6 887.10	4	21 337.45	13	24 590.70	15	15 767.75	7	11 802.10	5	10 295.85	5
ZAMBIA												
ZIMBABWE			1 312.00	1								
SUBTOTAL	72 434.92	68	109 349.30	95	192 507.18	119	114 839.00	73	138 478.40	93	115 409.05	84
ASSOCIATIONS, TRUSTS, INDIVIDUAL DONORS												
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS	300.00	1	21 767.00	4	34 252.00	3	1 300.00	3	5 300.00	3	2 980.00	3
MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS			4 080.00	1	600.00	1	1 300.00	1	1 300.00	1		
YOUTH					630.00	1	2 500.00	1	5 000.00	12	10 000.00	1
TRUSTS	24 013.00	1	18 915.80	1	53 229.21	1	59 441.51	3	35 139.36	1	46 844.37	1
BUSINESSES							46 000.00	1	56 500.00	1	42 000.00	1
IN MEMORIAM DONATIONS							16 350.00	11				
INDIVIDUALS	500.00	1	5 000.00	1	152 120.00	23	360.00	1	39 940.00	10	33 740.00	5
SUBTOTAL	24 813.00		49 762.80		240 831.21		127 251.51		143 179.36		135 564.37	
SUNDRY												
SALE OF BOOKMARKS					250.00							
UNKNOWN					337.00						600.00	
OVERALL TOTAL	97 247.92		159 112.10		433 925.39		242 090.51		281 657.76		251 573.42	

PEF: DONATIONS RECEIVED as at 30 June, 2016, by within Presbytery					
If you believe a contribution has been made and is not recorded here, or that the amount recorded is incorrect, please contact the PEF administrator. Thank you.					
PRESBYTERY	CONGREGATION	2015 Jul-Dec	2016 Jan-Jun	TOTAL July 2015- June 2016	
AMATHOLE	JZS Ncevu Memorial, Mlungisi, Queenstown	6 000.00		6 000.00	
		6 000.00	0.00	6 000.00	1
CENTRAL CAPE	Arcadia Jeffreys Bay St Andrew's, Walmer St Barnabas, PE St James', PE The Hill Trinity, Grahamstown Zwide	110.00 352.00 830.00 1 000.00 2 020.00	 500.00 1 000.00 1 805.00	110.00 500.00 1 000.00 352.00 830.00 1 805.00 1 000.00 2 020.00	
		4 312.00	3 305.00	7 617.00	8
DRAKENSBERG	Edendale Upper Umgeni	1 000.00	 1 370.00	1 000.00 1 370.00	
		1 000.00	1 370.00	2 370.00	2
EAST GRIQUALAND	Mpharane, Matatiele	500.00		500.00	
		500.00	0.00	500.00	1
eGOLI	Alexandra BE Ngubane (Central Jhb) Midrand St Giles St Mark's, Yeoville Trinity, Edenvale	1 160.00 1 144.60 10 200.00 844.00	 6 000.00 1 645.50 1 440.00	1 160.00 1 144.60 16 200.00 844.00 1 645.50 1 440.00	
		13 348.60	9 085.50	22 434.10	6
eTHEKWINI	Amanzimtoti Khayelihle		1 000.00 2 200.00	1 000.00 2 200.00	
			3 200.00	3 200.00	2
FREE STATE	St Andrew's, Constantia Zamdela	420.50 900.00	1 053.10 1 200.00	1 473.60 2 100.00	
		1 320.50	2 253.10	3 573.60	2
HIGHVELD	St Andrew's, Germiston St Andrew's, Benoni St Peter's, Tembisa	 3 000.00 1 084.80	 500.00 3 000.00	 500.00 6 000.00 1 084.80	
		4 084.80	3 500.00	7 584.80	3
LEKOA	All Saints, Klerksdorp St Anthony's, Sebokeng St Silas, Evaton	1 200.00 500.00 772.70		1 200.00 500.00 772.70	
		2 472.70	0.00	2 472.70	3
LIMPOPO	Donhill Gooldville Makwarela Polokwane Seshego William Samson	1 135.00 600.00 600.00 1 000.00 500.00	 1 000.00 719.20	1 135.00 600.00 600.00 2 000.00 719.20 500.00	
		3 835.00	1 719.20	5 554.20	6
MTHATHA	D V Skutshwa Erskine G T Vika John Knox Bokwe Khulani Lower Ngqawara Lower Rainy Miller S B Ngcobo Sommerville St Andrews T P Finca V V Dipa William Gavin ZS Tyandela Ngandu Nuclear Congregation		400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00	400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00 400.00	
			6 400.00	6 400.00	16
SOUTHERN CAPE REGIONAL COMM	George Presby Knysna Thembaletu Oudtshoorn	 1 000.00 200.00 500.00	 1 470.00	 1 470.00 1 000.00 200.00 500.00	
		1 700.00	1 470.00	3 170.00	4
PRESBYTERY	CONGREGATION	2015 Jul-Dec	2016 Jan-Jun	TOTAL July 2015- June 2016	
TRANSKEI	Columba Cunningham D D Stormont Mem Duff E E Xokozela Mem		800.00 1 000.00 800.00 500.00 500.00	800.00 1 000.00 800.00 500.00 500.00	

	Gcuwa		800.00	800.00	
	Irvin Njoloza		380.00	380.00	
	JL Sokupa		300.00	300.00	
	K Manakaza Mem		500.00	500.00	
	Lundie Mem		300.00	300.00	
	Maclay		144.00	144.00	
	Main	1 120.40	1 120.40		
	Malan	510.00	510.00		
	Mbulu	521.10	521.10		
	Ncisininde	525.00	525.00		
	Ndabakazi P/S	500.00	500.00		
	Ndakana	700.00	700.00		
	Njikelana	400.00	400.00		
	Tutura	850.00	850.00		
			11 150.50	11 150.50	19
TSHWANE	Emmanuel	12 925.00		12 925.00	
	Jonas Lediga, A'ville	2 000.00		2 000.00	
	Mabopane	942.00	2 455.30	3 397.30	
	St Mark's, Moregloed		564.00	564.00	
	Trinity, Lynnwood	2 000.00		2 000.00	
		17 867.00	3 019.30	20 886.30	5
uTHUKELA	Msinga		2 200.00	2 200.00	
			2 200.00	2 200.00	1
WESTERN CAPE	Bellville Presby	2 955.00		2 955.00	
	Darling		3 000.00	3 000.00	
	Pinelands	1 690.00		1 690.00	
	St Kieran's, Fishhoek		1 000.00	1 000.00	
	Stellenbosch United	1 110.85	540.00	1 650.85	
		5 755.85	4 540.00	10 295.85	5
SUB TOTAL		62196.45	53 212.60	115 409.05	84
ASSOCIATIONS, TRUSTS, INDIVIDUAL DONORS					
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS	Central Jhb UPWF		380.00	380.00	
	Hayfields UPWW		2 000.00	2 000.00	
	Nonzwakazi UPWW	600.00		600.00	
		600.00	2 380.00	2 980.00	3
MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS			0.00	0.00	
YOUTH	Youth Fellowship (Assembly)		10 000.00	10 000.00	
			10 000.00	10 000.00	1
TOTAL	ALL ASSOCIATIONS			12 980.00	
TRUSTS	Robert Niven Trust	45 934.99		45 934.99	
	Interest on RNT (backdated)		909.38	909.38	
TOTAL	ALL TRUSTS	45934.99	909.38	46 844.37	1
BUSINESSES	AMS HADEN (R Haden Instr Services (Pty) Ltd)		42 000.00	42 000.00	1
INDIVIDUALS	GR Jooste	460.00	200.00	660.00	
	J & I Rodger	1 200.00	1 200.00	2 400.00	
	Alan Campbell	500.00		500.00	
	Anonymous Indiv Don	10 000.00	20 000.00	30 000.00	
	Zandile Ngcobo- personal????		180.00	180.00	
TOTAL	INDIVIDUALS	12 160.00	21 580.00	33 740.00	5
SUB TOTAL	TOTAL	58 694.99	76 869.38	135 564.37	
UNKNOWN	"Bursary Contribution" December, 2012		600.00	600.00	
			600.00	600.00	
OVERALL TOTAL		120 891.44	130 681.98	251 573.42	
The PEF Task Team and members of the Education and Training Committee thank all congregations, Associations, Trusts, Businesses and individuals who have contributed to the Fund.					

Treasurers are reminded that donations should be deposited directly into the PEF bank account (details below) and that the deposit reference should name the source (congregation, association or presbytery):

Name of account: UPCS - Presbyterian Educational Fund

Bank: Standard Bank Branch Code: 000355 (Parktown)

Account Number: 20 085 175 6

Reference: One of the following: Name of congregation and Town /

Name of Presbytery / Association and name of Congregation or Presbytery /

The depositor's name should only be used as reference if the donation is made in the depositor's personal capacity. All donors/depositors are requested to follow up the deposit with an email or a fax to the administrator confirming the deposit and who it is from, with contact details included. The Central Office fax number is +27-11-727-3506 and the administrator's email address is pef@presbyterian.org.za.

The Investment Task Team of the Finance Committee moved the investments in the past financial year and this change resulted in an increase in the growth of the invested funds. Growth was still below inflation, at 4.72% overall, but we trust that this will improve with time.

As noted in the table above, donation income totalled R 251,573.42 in 2015/16, showing a *decrease* in both the amount received and the number of congregations that donated in this period. We trust that this will not

become the trend: fewer congregations, donating less each year.

Although the government of RSA is providing NSFAS assistance to certain South African students there is still a huge part for the PEF to play, since NSFAS loans on their own will leave students with large debts to pay once they qualify and start working. While they look for jobs and/or earn relatively low salaries in their first jobs, interest will be mounting up and the debt increasing. Unless our young people are to be crippled financially by the debt incurred by obtaining an education, we should continue to build up the PEF and contribute as much as possible towards their fees in order to reduce the debt that they will face when they join the work force. In Zimbabwe students who were promised government assistance have not always received it as the government struggles to meet its commitments. Zambian students also face huge financial obstacles, and we as the church must do the most we can to assist them.

Therefore

- The Task Team requests that PEF Sundays be used to actively advertise the work of the PEF and to make the existence of the fund known to members. Congregations are requested to keep the work of the PEF in their prayers. This request is made so that even if the congregation is unable to take up an offering for the PEF on PEF Sunday, the fund will still be prayed for and its work promoted on that day.
- All congregations are challenged to pray about their support of the PEF and to seek ways to raise money for the fund if their current situation does not permit a special offering or donation from congregational funds.

The PEF is faced with some major challenges:

The need for

- 1) double the amount of money to disburse
- 2) the need for applicants, ministers and Session Clerks
 - a) to read the instructions before completing and submitting the application forms
 - b) to comply with the instructions both at the time of application and subsequently at the end of the year and the beginning of the new year
- 3) application forms to be submitted well before the 30 September deadline.

If the first challenge could be met, the PEF would be able to come much closer to meeting the goal of making contributions that really lift the burden of the cost of education from the shoulders of our UPCS members who are struggling to educate their children and give them a better chance in life.

Achieving the second set of challenges would result in more applicants being assisted. There are always a number of applicants whose information and documentation is never received in full and who subsequently never receive assistance. Surely many amongst these are the very people the PEF most aspires to assist, and if they had been helped to ensure full compliance at all stages of the process, we would be achieving so much more and reaching so many more of our young people who desperately need the assistance the PEF can give.

It is very disappointing and disheartening to have to note that in spite of decisions of General Assembly and previous ExCos and Assemblies, the deadline for submission is largely ignored, and year after year the bulk of the forms arrive well after 30 September. This is surely the easiest of the challenges to overcome, but it can only be done if the applicants, ministers and Session Clerks alike make it a priority. This is the first step towards a streamlined process with awards paid out more efficiently and sooner. However it can only be achieved with the assistance of all concerned.

Previous reports to GA and ExCO have stated the problem areas in detail. The Information Sheet and the Presbytery Tool Kit give information about the Fund, eligibility and requirements which the applicants must meet. Ministers and Session Clerks are requested to ensure that all applicants have a copy of the Information Sheet and that their attention is drawn to the steps which they must follow in order to supply the necessary documentation, at the required times.

Where to get information about the PEF, the application process and the Application Forms:

- The Presbytery Tool Kit contains a section with information on the PEF and the awarding of bursaries.
- The PEF page on the UPCS website contains information about the PEF and the criteria for PEF assistance.
- All ministers, Presbytery Clerks and PEF liaison people are sent the Information Sheet which also gives this information.
- Anyone who does not have access to any of the above may contact the PEF administrator.
- Applicants are advised to retain the section of the Application form headed "Information to be noted before completing the application form" as this information reminds them what they must do when.
- Application Forms are available on the UPCS website **by no later than 7 July each year.**
- All interested parties are reminded that PEF bursaries do not carry over: awards are for one year only and applicants must re-apply for further assistance.

Awards to Zambia and Zimbabwe

Special thanks must be made to Mr Benson Njobvu and The Presbytery of Zimbabwe Education Trust through Mr Gilbert Matika, for assisting with payments to Zambia and Zimbabwe in the period August to December, 2016. Mr Njobvu contacted Zambian students and followed up to obtain all their outstanding documentation and personally deposited the payments to the institutions. Mr George Mutonhora of the Zimbabwe Education

Trust very kindly made the payments in Zimbabwe. The challenge here is to minimize bank charges levied by the receiving banks when the UPCSAs have already paid all transfer costs in South Africa before the money is transferred. A similar challenge is the distribution of the amounts to the different schools and institutions in Zambia and Zimbabwe without the amounts awarded being reduced to meet bank charges. All amounts awarded by the PEF must reach the recipients in full. The task team will continue to work on this problem until a satisfactory solution is reached.

Data Base

- The new data base for the PEF, linking in to the UPCSAs data base of congregations and ministers, has been installed, although it is not complete as yet and a number of gremlins continue to interfere.
- The Donations section, reporting and correspondence with applicants/recipients are still to be completed.

Administration

- The new task team will have to consider the question of succession planning and make decisions in conjunction with the Church Office Committee.
- The Task Team remains grateful to the denomination for carrying all administrative costs of the Fund, including the administrator's salary, telephone and stationery costs, in line with the decision of the 1972 General Assembly of the PCSA which established the fund.

MISS E WHITE PEF

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission expresses its sincerest thanks to all whose donations to the PEF ensure the ongoing work of the fund and thanks the members of the outgoing Task Team for their service and commitment to the Fund over many years.
3. The Executive Commission declares Sunday, 17 June, 2018 PEF Sunday and requests all congregations to hold a retiring offering for the PEF on that Sunday or another of the congregation's choosing in June, 2018.
4. The Executive Commission urges all ministers and Session Clerks to screen applications stringently, by checking that applicants have completed the forms correctly and in full, and included all required documentation, before signing the forms.
5. The Executive Commission notes that the deadline for submission of completed application forms is 30 September annually and that late submissions will not be accepted.

COMMUNICATIONS

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

INTRODUCTION

The 2016 General Assembly appointees to this committee were: the Revs. MA Muller (Convener), The General Secretary, Mrs G Kelly, Mr J Munthali, Rev M Mzinyathi, Ms E White, along with corresponding members, the Revs. T Groeneveld, S Phaika and the Clerk of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe

MEETING

The Communications Committee met at Tiyo Soga House on Thursday, 17 May 2017. Apart from apologies from the Rev. T Groeneveld and Mrs G Kelly, the meeting was held with the Convenor, the General Secretary, the Clerk of Assembly and the Chief Financial Officer only in attendance. The following issues were dealt with:

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE 2016 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Using the Skills/Talent in the Church for Effective and Timeous Communication (GS)

Good help is hard to find. However, after much agonizing, help was found in Christine Kasambara, the Ministry Secretary's PA. The Ministry Committee convenor agreed to allow her to be involved with updating the website. This means that communications from the General Assembly office and other organizations within the church will be timeously published. Christine will be properly trained to acquire the skills needed for this work and then remunerated for the additional work she will be doing.

Drawing up a Policy/Plan that will boost the church's profile (GS)

The Committee has yet to finalise a policy/plan to achieve this goal. Having said this, the work of boosting the church's profile is probably better done by the daily witness of our congregations in their respective communities.

Consideration of the Practicalities of Creating Chat Rooms on the UPCSAs website to facilitate input from all members of the Church and online debate with the members of the Task Team on issues being considered by the Task Team (Manual Task Team)

Upon taking advice, the Committee is of the opinion that an open forum on our website requires moderation which is time-consuming and requires full time attention. Control is required to eliminate spam, inappropriate interactions etc. All of which could compromise the church. What is available through Android and Apple devices, which is easy to use and free is an application called GOOGLE HANGOUTS. Group chats are do-able by means of video, voice only, or texting. Line speed (ADSL or data) will determine what kind of chat will be used.

UNAUTHORISED FACEBOOK PAGES/GROUPS and WEBSITES

The General Secretary raised the matter of many groups and pages, including some websites (not local churches) that exist under the banner of the UPCSAs. In almost each case, no approval or authorisation from the General Assembly Office had been sought. The denomination's logo is used and often in a format that does not resemble the original logo. For example, it sometimes appears to be grossly distorted in terms of height and breadth ratio. These are not small matters. In a corporate environment, such things are taken very seriously. Whilst the church is not a corporation, it would like to see uniformity in the use of such things as the logo, general approval for websites and Facebook pages or groups purporting to belong to the UPCSAs. Naturally, some kind of policy will need to be firmly in place to guide this process.

THE PRESBYTERIAN LINK

It is a sad reality that the Presbyterian Link fails to be circulated by some Presbyteries, congregations and ministers. Also, lacking are contributions that could greatly enrich the life and work of the UPCSAs. It is also a reality that the Presbyterian Link vies for the attention of its readership at a time where internet-based news and articles that are often more stimulating than what is circulated. Thus there are a number of challenges for this publication to overcome and these will be the focus of our attention in this regard. Once again, a special word of thanks must be expressed to Mrs Glenys Kelly for her excellent work in putting together the various publications over the recent months.

CONCLUSION

It is our hope that the Communications Committee will be able to go beyond its challenges and deliver services to the UPCSAs that will facilitate the spread of the Gospel, denominational news and other articles that might be of interest.

Yours because of Christ

MIKE MULLER
CONVENER

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission urges the administrators of the various groups on Facebook, along with website administrators who invoke the name of the UPCS and use its logo to contact the General Assembly office so that a standard and policy can be established in this regard.
3. The Executive Commission encourages our ministers and congregants to contribute news and theological articles and images where appropriate for publication in the Presbyterian Link.

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

APPENDIX B

MISSIONAL PICTURE OF YOUR CONTEXT

From the general to the particular.

What are the needs, where are the opportunities?

1) What is the 'story' of the community you are in? What has shaped its history?

a. What hardships and difficulties are people facing?

i. Economic

ii. Social

iii. Emotional

iv. Spiritual

b. What do people most value?

c. What about demographics:

i. Age

ii. Cultural diversity

iii. Urban/rural/inner city/other

2) Produce a map (sketch on a separate page) of your community indicating places where people gather and the places of greatest need.

a. Where do people in the community meet?

b. What opportunities are there to connect with people?

c. What are the greatest needs of the people?

d. What acts of service will bring Jesus to the community?

3) What are the ways/means by which people are already being reached with the Gospel?

4) What have I learned from this exercise?

Amatola, RSA	Former Ciskei, East London & King Williamstown Includes RPC and PCSA congregations Out of 42 congregations, 18 have Ministers	Poorest province in SA; high unemployment. People leave for to seek work (go to Gauteng, C Town, Free State, Mpumalanga & KZN). Many families dependent on social grants. Teenage pregnancy on the increase; heavily patriarchal, with violence against women & children; drug abuse and lack of housing Anxiety; depression; suicide; eating disorders; fear of family violence Spiritually challenged during union of Associations/ split congregations	Their Minister and their Associations They want to worship in a church – not in a school or other space	Mostly senior citizens and middle aged people (youth leave to seek employment) Culturally diverse: Xhosa, English and Afrikaans Combination of urban & rural (1 inner city: East London)	People meet to worship in church halls and schools There is a need for Missional leadership Agricultural support would be a way to reach out into the community (Mizurani model)	No new churches are being planted. Energy is being sapped by Association tensions.
Central Cape, RSA	Lies pretty much between Eastern and Western Cape, and along the coast. Large distances between centres gave rise to formation of Southern Cape Regional Commission to facilitate oversight. Includes Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Somerset East and interior region.	Political instability is an issue in the area. Wide spread unemployment. Outside of Port Elizabeth, only one congregation has a full-time minister	People in the area need unity – both socially and in the Associations, which are considered to be very important	Culturally diverse: Xhosa, English and Afrikaans		Sustainability remains a problem and draws energy and attention.

Central Cape, South, RSA	<p>Southern Cape Regional Commission: southern-most part of Central Cape Presbytery (George, Oudtshoorn, Knysna, Plettenberg Bay) (Garden Route)</p> <p>6 congregations in all; 4 have Ministers</p> <p>Each Ministers attends the Central Cape Presbytery meetings once a year</p>	<p>Large population but very few jobs; disparity between rich and poor. Rich people flaunt their wealth.</p> <p>Crime on the increase; especially drug-related crime; disparity between different social strata</p> <p>Emotional problems include absentee fathers, high divorce rates and broken homes due to alcohol/drug abuse</p> <p>Area has many church affiliations/denominations; rich folk feel no need for God (atheism); social temptations include shabeens and drugs</p>	<p>People value the weather and to have their basic needs met. Look to RDP housing and social welfare.</p> <p>Government services here more efficient than in the Eastern Cape</p>	<p>Many people are retired (55 – 80+) but there are young families</p> <p>Culturally very diverse: Xhosa, Khoi-San, white South Africans. International “experts” come from UK, USA, Germany and Russia</p> <p>Mostly urban (George) / rural (Oudtshoorn, Knysna & Plettenberg Bay) communities</p>	<p>People meet to worship in church buildings</p> <p>Project “New Life”</p> <p>It is possible to connect with people through funerals, youth, children, poverty alleviation projects, weddings, divorce, recovering alcoholics & drug addicts – make church buildings available to the community</p> <p>The greatest needs are poverty alleviation for the poor, support for alcoholics and drug abusers and domestic issues. The rich folk have a great need for Christ. We can bring Jesus to the community through social justice; caring for addicts and loving the unloved</p>	<p>Exiting projects are: George = youth outreach</p> <p>Knysna = narcotics anonymous</p> <p>Thembaletum, Garden Route & Plett = Project New Life</p> <p>There is a possible church plant in Plettenberg town</p>
Copperbelt, Zambia	<p>Mining area; does not generate enough employment for local people</p> <p>Has 12 congregations and 8 transitional congregations; served by 7 ministers and 8 CDEs.</p>	<p>Many child-headed households. Insufficient recreational facilities. Most congregations are in towns – but in the poorer sections of the towns.</p>	<p>People are being drawn to traditional healers / prophets because they are desperate for “something” to make their lives better.</p>			<p>Starting house churches and growing from there</p>
Drakensberg, RSA	<p>Predominantly urban congregations. Concerned about population explosion and increasing</p>	<p>Families depend on social grants and grannies’ pensions. High rate of unemployment; child-</p>	<p>Communities are drawn to enjoying themselves and having a nice time. Alcoholism is</p>	<p>Community is inter-generational and the Presbytery enjoys cultural diversity. Most congregations</p>	<p>People prefer to live in town as they consider this to be safer. There is therefore a potential</p>	<p>Elderly people and children are regular church-goers. Children are active in Sunday schools.</p>

	difficulty of obtaining sites for churches. Some congregations meet in school classrooms. 13 congregations – 8 urban, 5 rural. Served by 12 ministers. Some congregations worship in school halls; city sites for new churches not readily available.	headed homes and crime. There are lots of un-cared for children. The use of drugs among young people is rife. Stress and anger reign supreme. There is nevertheless a belief that great things can still be done by the church.	prevalent among both males & females. Unemployment/ idleness/ lack of recreational facilities = drinking/ drugging and early pregnancies	are urban-based.	for church-planting in the towns. It is possible to connect with people at funerals and community marquee services. Volunteers connect with the youth when they visit/ preach in the schools. Greatest needs appear to be employment, stability and discipline.	Thursday services are still in good shape for women to attend. Congregation at Edendale grew to 24 outstations. Congregation was restructured and the outstations raised the money to build a manse to start a new congregation.
East Griqualand, RSA						
eGoli, RSA	33 Congregations from Edenvale to Krugersdorp, including Midrand. 19 Full-time ministers; 2 stated-supply; one network project of 3 congregations sharing 1 minister. Presbytery is alive; congregations vibrant & healthy.	Economic mix – some very rich, others poor as church mice. Socially are confronted with all the good and all the bad associated with big cities – drugs/ alcohol/ crime etc. Mine closures particularly on the Western side are causing loss of work. There are on-going issues in the Associations. Spiritually quite strong but growing charismatic churches are attracting our youth.	Time is a most valuable commodity – most people seem to have too many things to do.	Biggest age group is between 25-40. Mostly urban-based, therefore quite culturally diverse.	Most congregations meet in church buildings but some have made other arrangements – eg 4 Way United meets at the Indaba Hotel. People need a place to belong and stable jobs. Church members need to be more Christ-like and outward looking.	Will be appointing a Presbytery Mission Enabler. Many members have attended the MSM course. New residential places being built everywhere provide opportunities for church plants.
Free State, RSA	Free State province has mines in Welkom and Virginia. Most of the people have come from other provinces to work in the mines.	Economy of the country is not stable; many people have lost their jobs because mines are closing down. Drought	People value – and spend their time – drinking, watching/ playing games and looking for jobs.	The population is mostly old people and young people. Because of job migration, very many	People meet for fellowship in churches, tents, tin houses, personal houses	Crusades, "Jesus Film", rallies, starting new outstations and nuclear congregations

	<p>Also lots of farms, where many people work.</p> <p>There are 28 congregations in the Presbytery.</p>	<p>has affected jobs on farms. People enjoy football games and other activities which keep them busy – eg taverns and clubs where they drink beer. Most people are not working, so this has damaged them emotionally and spiritually. Travelling ministries pitch tents in the townships and stay for 3 months. Then they leave and the people who had been worshipping there are abandoned. There is a need for spiritual stability.</p>		<p>cultures live together.</p> <p>Free State has 3 urban congregations, 1 inner city, many township churches, 3 rural outstations and transitional congregations</p>	<p>There are opportunities to connect with people at football grounds, weddings and funerals; at their houses and at taxi ranks</p> <p>Young people need work; some people need houses and some need food.</p> <p>Food gardens and soup kitchens, projects like HIV, old age homes and orphans homes will bring Jesus to the community</p>	
Highveld, RSA						
Lekoa, RSA						
Limpopo	<p>At the union in 199 the Presbytery was composed of members of the former RPCSA and PCSA and there is still a challenge about practical unity. Divisions grounded in these historical alignments still rear their head. There are also divisions based on ethnic groups. Strongly traditional/ tribal.</p>	<p>Limpopo is a rural province, with little capacity to employ its citizens. Basic services are needed. Economy is poor; employment is sought after. This province had high racial segregation and society has not yet integrated. On the surface people are jovial but there is deep seated anger over Church divisions in the past – both</p>	<p>People value unity; they seek peace (and healing of the memories of the past) and harmony. They desire hope and respect for the church.</p>	<p>Average age is 45 – which is a concern for the future.</p> <p>There is cultural diversity, which is both racially and ethnically based. Youth have raised concern that leadership seems to be in one tribal group.</p> <p>Only one urban congregation (Mt Horeb); the rest of the Presbytery is rural.</p>	<p>Presbytery has congregations with (min) 2 and (max) 25 outstations. 40@ have structures they meet in. Some meet in schools, One outstation meets in the Chief's Kraal; some in members' homes. Social media provides opportunities to connect with the new generation. Planned workshops and meetings would be well received. A</p>	<p>Ministers are meeting the people; Associations are utilised for outreach and tent crusades & open air services are held at 3 congregations. In some congregations midweek services take place. In total 4 areas have been identified for church planting.</p>

		racially and denominationally. The Presbytery has a need to grow spiritually. A general feeling of spiritually inadequacy attracts people to the false prophets.			website could be used. The greatest need is for jobs, jobs, jobs to enable people to live. Most people survive on grants. Revival services, home cell groups, tent evangelisation outreach and conferences & seminars would bring Jesus to the community.	
M'chinga, Zambia	The Presbytery is named after the M'chinga Escarpment. Was born in November 2006 out of a desire by Central Zambia Presbytery to grow the church towards the Eastern Province. Stretches from Lusaka towards the East. 18 calling congregations & 12 "transitional" congregations; served by 8 ministers (2 retired and 1 without a pastoral charge) and 15 CDEs.	Majority of members are farmers; small group of marketeers (cross border traders); handful of retired civil servants. Incomes are low; minimum access to health care and demands of farming (eg during the rainy season) restrict church involvement. People tend to have low self-esteem; need for the elderly to care for the young has upset traditional family roles and people are drifting towards "prophets" for reassurance about their future.	People value (and therefore strive towards) a better living standard. Congregations value having a minister.	30% of folk are elderly; the 70% are youth – most of whom are unemployed. Area is dominated by one culture group; either urban or peri-urban with a handful of urban communities.	Most congregations meet to worship in church buildings they have built themselves; some meet in schools and a few in grass-built halls. Outside of church activities people meet in commerce (farmers & traders) and projects aimed at meeting practical needs. The greatest need is for economic independence and sustainability. Services that would bring Jesus to the community would be those engage in practical empowerment (eg micro-financing); being a prophetic voice for the people,	The CDEs play a strong role as there are only a few ministers. Family evangelism takes place when farmers go to their home villages and spread the gospel. House to house evangelism and an open crusade would be effective.

					standing with them and being a voice for the voiceless.	
Munali, Zambia	<p>Munali Presbytery was born in 2006, when Central Zambia Presbytery split into two. Centred around the city of Lusaka.</p> <p>There are 14 congregations, in excess of 6 Preaching stations. We have 12 ministers and 4 evangelists.</p>	<p>Unemployment is the biggest challenge. Some congregation unable to meet stipend requirements. Presbytery is considering centralising payment of stipends. Presbytery dominated by Tumbuka-speaking people. Other smaller tribal groups feel excluded. Some tribal/ language issues being experienced. People are stressed and feel hopeless. People are drawn to the prosperity gospel and prophetic kind of spirituality. Concern that young people in particular are drifting away from the main-stream churches.</p>	<p>People value the heritage of the sound doctrine the forefathers left – that is to the old folk.</p>	<p>70% youth / 30% elderly.</p> <p>There are two or three cultural groups in Lusaka; dominated by one group in South Province.</p> <p>Most of the congregations are based in and around Lusaka (urban)</p>	<p>Three/ quarters of congregations meet in self-built, simple structures.</p> <p>The greatest identified needs are for financial independence and education</p> <p>Outreach programs and training, particularly skills training. Will bring Jesus to the community.</p>	<p>Sunday worship services; evangelism (door-to-door by the different associations); seminars and conferences; and through the CDEs.</p>
Thekwini, RSA	<p>Indian Ocean of Kwa Zulu Natal, congregations in and around Durban and inland to Pietermaritzburg area. 29 congregations in all; 11 have full-time ministers; 6 stated-supply. Contrast between suburban congregations</p>	<p>Tough economic times. Growing gap between rich and poor – not necessarily based solely on race. Some very rich folk; others very poor. Unemployment gives rise, eg, to prostitution. Changing demographics causes “suburban” churches</p>	<p>For many, possessions are the most valuable things. Some people value fellowship; interaction within the church. Sound theology provides a firm foundation in changing times. People need a sense of belonging – if not to the church, then to</p>	<p>Need to bridge the generation gap and mix cultures/ adapt to other cultures to allow all freedom during worship. The inner cities particularly have become extremely diverse from a cultural perspective. New cultures developing.</p>	<p>People socialise in shopping centres, restaurants & coffee shops and entertainment centres. Also a large sporting community. The church could start faith conversations/ communities where people are already meeting. People need to belong</p>	<p>New church plant at Molweni. Glenwood outreach is currently running an Alpha course at an old age home</p>

	(traditionally white) and (black) rural/ township congregations.	to become more "inner city". Poor sector of population disillusioned; migration in search of employment disrupting families. Communities are spiritually unsettled; searching for contemporary spiritual home (tradition –vs- relevance to current context) People are afraid.	social clubs, etc	Congregations are inner city, suburban, township and rural	to a faith community that is accepting and allows for spiritual growth. We can reflect Jesus by showing care & acceptance and allowing people to belong. Being like Jesus. Skills-based learning would add value.	
Thukela, RSA						
<u>Tiyo Soga Synod</u> Mthatha Presbytery Transkei Presbytery	Very rural Presbyteries – but vibrant and flourishing. 54 spiritually effective congregations. Ratio of ministers to congregations is 3:4 but each congregation has about 20 outstations each with approximately 20 members. The Synod meets annually; the Presbyteries quarterly.	There is a high level of unemployment – with the resulting poverty and no recreational facilities at all. Communities live in fear of crime – rape, drugs, murder, alcohol abuse, etc. Folk have to travel long distances to reach their places of worship.	People value the communal life (Ubuntu)/ Unity	People are mostly Xhosa or Sotho-speaking and practice the same culture. Most congregations are rurally-based.	Congregations meet to worship in their outstations; gathering at the main station for special events. Community projects (eg gardening or sewing) would be a way to connect with the community The community's greatest need is employment and a sustainable livelihood. We could reflect Jesus in evangelism outreach projects.	Outreach could be done through revival services. Also deliberately going into places where people are unchurched and telling people about Jesus. A lot of evangelism takes place through the Associations.
Tshwane, RSA	Tshwane Presbytery stretches from Hazyview/ Nelspruit in the East to beyond Sun City in the West. Made up of rural, small town/ village, suburban & urban	Unemployment is rife; elderly folk receive only Government grants & have to share with their families; some folk (like widows under 60) receive nothing at	A lot of folk place a high value on family and home, but for some the attraction of the things that money can buy is difficult to resist. Some commit all their income to	For most congregations – birth to about 17; then a gap; then 45 to REALLY old. Multi-cultural and multi-lingual (and in	People meet in homes, shopping malls, at funerals, sports and churches. The "rat race" nature of Gauteng makes opportunities to connect with people a	One local congregation has formed a "daughter" which currently worships in the mother-church's premises but aims to buy land and build

	<p>congregations. Many people have migrated into the area in search of employment so we have many languages. Rural congregations (and some suburban congregations, too) have characteristically older congregations as the younger folk have moved away, either in search of employment or into the charismatic churches. Inner-city churches have become homes to a "floating community" of folk who come and go, many of them foreign nationals.</p> <p>27 congregations and 1 transitional. About half have called ministers.</p>	<p>all. Transport/ distance is a big problem. In rural/ village congregations, particularly, members have to raise their grandchildren as the parents of these children work in the cities. In industrial areas members work shifts and over weekends/ Sundays. Has negative impact on relationships within the church. Crime rate is high and drug abuse, particularly among school children, on the increase. Any threat of job losses causes great anxiety. Increasing sophistication among city/suburban dwellers draws folk into activities that are not church-related. This is particularly so in young people.</p>	<p>acquiring "stuff" and have nothing saved. Clearly this impacts on church giving.</p>	<p>the inner-cities also multi-national)</p> <p>Have urban, rural and inner city congregations</p>	<p>challenge but folk can connect in taxis, at schools, malls, funerals, sports and churches.</p> <p>People's greatest needs are economic, joblessness, fear of crime, a need for peace, family strain, tiredness and stress</p> <p>Addressing poverty, stress, loneliness and family needs would bring Jesus to the community</p>	<p>The Tshwane M&D is involved in a church plant in the north of Pretoria, to serve residential areas far from traditional congregations</p> <p>In Nelspruit/Hazyview there are currently 12 candidate Lay Preachers in training to plant new congregations in the outlying areas</p>
Western Cape, RSA	<p>At Union in 1999, Presbytery consisted of 27 former PCSA and 7 former RPCSA congregations. Has now grown to 47 congregations, many of which are united congregations. There are 84</p>	<p>Too few people are working in decent jobs. Corruption undermines state legitimacy and service delivery. Society experiences drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, gang violence and violence</p>	<p>Generally members embrace our fundamental doctrines; senior citizens tend to be more traditional. Most value the concept of family along with unity and peace. Congregations value</p>	<p>Most congregations are intergenerational. Integration on both racial and language grounds is taking place eg the Jean Calvin (French speaking) Congregation which is mainly foreign</p>	<p>People socialise in taverns, sport events, entertainment areas, malls, funerals and church buildings & tents. All these places/ events present opportunity to connect – also public transport, workshops</p>	<p>The Presbytery Church Development Committee is active and involved in planting both new churches and new worshipping communities. Funds are made available to support new</p>

	ministers in total: 42 active; 31 retired; 8 without charge; 1 associate; 1 seconded; 1 self-supporting. 34 congregations have full-time ministers.	against women & children. Quality of education in most township schools is substandard and housing is inadequate. Communities are afraid – of family violence, gangs and crime. Families are broken. Embracing cultural diversity in the UPCSA remains a spiritual challenge within the Presbytery. Congregations have been clustered across racial lines to promote unity and understanding. Misunderstandings related to CUC need to be clarified.	the presence of their Interim Moderators	nationals.	and conferences. People need jobs; better houses; safety – a better life. We can reflect Jesus by encouraging a sense of belonging; caring; addressing social challenges	developments.
Zimbabwe	36 congregations and 26 transitional congregations; with 34 ordained ministers and 26 CDEs Major challenge is growth which necessitates large efforts to reach out and make new worshipping communities	Despite abundant natural resources, Zimbabwe one of the poorest countries in Africa today. Unemployment at 95%; majority live below poverty line. Companies are closing; parents unable to pay school fees or rent; food is scarce. Congregations unable to support ministry of the church. With no employment or recreation facilities,	People value the diversity of our cultures Also value their ministers	Elderly people, particularly women, dominate in most congregations Great cultural diversity – Shona, Ndebele, Nda, Tonga, Venda and others Most congregation are urban-based	People meet in church buildings, in school classrooms and municipal buildings or (2 congregations) under a tree. There are opportunities to connect through Scripture Union at local schools and community projects. People's greatest needs are for employment and pastoral care (the	Towards the end of 2015 we held a family national conference which was well attended. Last year we had a Stewardship Seminar which was an eye-opening to most members of the church

		<p>drug abuse increasing; also pregnancy, crime and domestic violence. People live unproductive lives. This leaves space for anyone to come in and use people any hour – like the politicians in Zimbabwe are doing. They take advantage of the idleness and use the youth for their own purposes. Deprived of rights & livelihood, population is stressed; fight and kill each other over petty issues; emotion-related diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes and ulcers are increasing. People seeking solutions to their everyday lives are coming to church hoping for answers, eg by being a voice for the voiceless.</p>			<p>Ministry of Presence). Outreach programs will bring Jesus to the community</p>	
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CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

Confirmation

The main Confessions Report this year mentions that this Supplementary Report would include a Confirmation Lesson. This is printed below in Appendix C. Appendix C therefore needs to be read in conjunction with what the main Report states about teaching confirmation, including the need for feedback.

The Hansie Wolmarans Issue

The General Assembly in 2016 considered a complaint against Professor J.L.P. Wolmarans. (For the details of the extended complaint see Notice of Motion 6, *Proceedings and Decisions of the 12th General Assembly 2016*, p.514f.) In response to this the Assembly

- ruled that “it appears that there may be grounds for misconduct” [the minutes mean grounds for a *charge of misconduct!*],
- referred the complaint to the Court of Assembly,
- appointed two ministers, Brent Russell and Jeremy Smith, as its representatives to present the complaint; and
- further ruled that Prof. Wolmarans’s status as Minister Emeritus be withheld pending the decision of the Court. (*Proceedings and Decisions of the 12th General Assembly 2016*, p.526).

The Court later persuaded the Moderator to appoint a committee to investigate this matter. The committee eventually reported to the Court of Assembly under the name of “the Wolmarans Commission”. The Court then referred the whole matter, including the report of the “commission”, to the Executive Commission. The report of the “commission” came to the Task Team’s notice too late for it to include any comment on it in its main Report to the Executive Commission. But it constitutes an attack on the UPCS Confession of Faith amounting to a repudiation of its status, its assertions and its relevance, to which the Confessions Task Team is obliged to respond, and this response is set out in Appendix D below

Two issues are involved in this matter: *the procedure that was followed* and *the “findings” in the report of the “commission”*. Appendix D constitutes a critique of both of these. Its aim is:

1. to persuade the Executive Commission not to receive the committee’s report but refer the whole procedure back to the Court; and
2. if the Executive Committee does instead decide to receive the report, to have on record the extremely grave errors of the report for any debate that may then take place on its contents.

The original draft of this report therefore included the following two proposals:

The Executive Commission, in the light of Appendix D below,

- a) rules that the procedures which the Court of Assembly has so far followed in dealing with the complaint against Prof. Hansie Wolmarans, including the appointment of the so-called “Wolmarans Commission” and the production of its report, were gravely irregular in terms of the rules of the Manual and declares them out of order;
- b) refuses to receive or debate the so-called “Wolmarans Commission” report and its findings, which have been referred to it; and
- c) refers the case back to the Court to proceed with in accordance with the decision of the 2016 Assembly and in accord with the rules of the *Manual* (including para 18.62).

The Executive Commission urges the member of the Court of Assembly who was a member of the so-called “Wolmarans Commission” to recuse himself when the Court sits to consider the complaint and charges against Prof. Wolmarans. (See para 18.23 of the *Manual*.)

Subsequently to the drafting of this Supplementary Report, however, the Presbytery of the Western Cape resolved to present a Notice of Motion about the matter to the Executive Commission. The Notice of Motion focuses on the irregularities in the procedure that was followed. In order to avoid duplication, therefore, the two proposals cited have now been dropped from the present Report. We have retained the rationale for them, however, because it sets out the argument in support of the Notice of Motion more adequately than the latter can. The main concern and focus of this report is in any case the content of the report of the “commission”.

DOUGLAS S. BAX

CONVENER

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PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the Supplementary Report.
2. The Executive Commission approves the Confirmation Lesson in Appendix C below for use and comment, all comments to be sent to the convener.
3. The Executive Commission notes Appendix D and refers it to the Court of Assembly to: "The Executive Commission in referring the complaint and the charges against Prof. J.L.P. Wolmarans back to the Court of Assembly, refers Appendix D to it as well."
4. The Executive Commission refers Chapter 18, Section 6, of the Manual to the Manual Committee to redraft more explicitly and clearly all points in it that can be misunderstood. (On this see Appendix D.)
5. The Executive Commission instructs the Assembly Office to insert the document on Essential Doctrine into the Manual, after the Confession of Faith.

APPENDIX C

CONFIRMATION LESSON: WHO WAS, AND IS, JESUS?

Purpose: To look at the question of Jesus' identity, in terms of humanity and deity.

Needed

Bibles, paper and pens.

Different pictures of Jesus (as different as you can find, in books and on the internet).

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Welcome and Prayer. Check that everyone has a Bible.

B. Input: The Question

Show the different pictures of Jesus.

Jesus faced people, as he faces us, with the question: Who was he? Who is he?

Get everyone to write down two or three questions he/she has about Jesus.

Collect these and read them out anonymously, with everyone copying down all the questions.

Break into groups, discuss the questions and report back.

People asked who Jesus really was, while he lived on earth:

Three examples, to read together: Matt. 13:54-57, 21:1-10, 9:7-9.

Jesus asked his disciples the same question: Mk. 8:27f.

People gave different answers to the question:

(Depending on the time available, the class can break up into groups to read the following texts, find how Jesus is identified in each and discuss which identification they think is closest to the truth.)

- Mk.3:21: (a person out of his mind)
- Mk.3:22: (a person possessed by a demon, i.e.insane, and a tool of Satan)
- Jn.3:2: (a teacher inspired by God)
- Mk.8:27f.: (a prophet like Elijah or John the Baptist)
- Mk.8:29: (the Messiah (but what does that mean?))
- Mk.8:30-35: (a secret, suffering Messiah (cf. the Suffering Servant in Isa. 53:1-11))

C. Input: Answer 1

What do the following texts tell us about Jesus? (These texts can be discussed in groups again.)

- Lk. 2:52 (he grew in wisdom and stature)
- Lk. 2:46 (he needed to ask questions)
- Matt. 5:32, 24:36 (he did not know everything even as an adult and acknowledged this)
- Jn. 11:35 cf. 38 (he wept)
- Jn. 19:28 (he suffered thirst)
- Heb. 13:12 (he suffered pain and death like us)
- Heb. 2:14,17, 4:15 (he shared our humanity in every way except sin)

Do you think that Jesus would have known how radar worked or that water consisted of two atoms of hydrogen to every one of water (H₂O)?

D. Input: Answer 2

Yet the New Testament also describes Jesus as one with God or somehow identical with God:

- Mk.4:35-41: Jesus stilled the storm. In biblical thinking only God had the power to do that: see Ps. 104:5-7 (creation), 106:8f.(exodus) and especially 89:9, 93:3f., 107:23-31.
- Mk.2:1-12: Jesus forgave sins on his own authority. In Jewish thinking only God could do that, which it a blasphemy for any human being to claim to do.
- Lk.15: Jesus implied that his actions embodied God's own attitudes.
- Jn. 20:24-28 The Resurrection made Jesus Lord over life and death and caused him to be worshipped as God. (The Greek means "God", not a "god", which the Jehovah's Witnesses believe Christ to be.)
- Jn. 14:8-11 This passage expresses the conclusion that the New Testament draws.

We will look at this question again next time.
(A suitable video on Jesus can also be shown.)

E. Homework

Write a private, completely honest paragraph on the question: "What do I myself really think of Jesus?"

APPENDIX D

CRITIQUE OF THE PROCEDURE IN THE CASE CONCERNING PROF. HANSIE WOLMARANS AND OF THE FINDINGS OF THE SO-CALLED "WOLMARANS COMMISSION"

The Rules of the Manual

The *Manual* lays down for cases such as the one in which a complaint was laid against Prof. Hansie Wolmarans at the General Assembly in 2016 that "When an act of misconduct is alleged, the Council [i.e. the Assembly in this case] may, if it wishes, appoint a *committee* to investigate and report on the circumstances" (para 18.60). Para 18.60-61 make clear that this provision in 18.60 is to help the Council find out further information, when the Council finds this necessary, to help it decide between two alternative options, namely:

- that "there may be grounds for disciplinary action", so that it should receive the allegation or complaint and refer it to the Court for investigation and trial and
- that clearly no such grounds exist, so that it should refuse to receive the allegation or complaint and so *not* refer it to the Court.

(In this case, then, such a committee would have been tasked with investigating what Prof. Wolmarans had stated and taught in his publications and website statements and debates and in his teaching at the University of Johannesburg and at St. Columba's, Parkview, and compiling a *factual* report on this.) It is also clear, therefore, that the appointment of a committee under para 18.60 is optional, but that if the Council does appoint such a committee, the committee is to report back to *the Council*. If on the other hand the Council decides that there may be grounds for disciplinary action and so goes ahead with implementing para 18.61 and referring the matter to the Court without appointing such a committee, the option of para 18.60 then falls away as unnecessary.

The Clerk of the Court must then implement para 18.62 and the Court must implement the "Informal Procedure" by itself appointing a *commission* of two or more ministers and one or more Elders to approach the alleged offender and proceed with the "Informal Procedure" in para. 18.63 and 67. If the alleged offender confesses guilt and repents, para. 18.68 is implemented. If he/she does not confess guilt and repent, then the Court must proceed with implementing the "Formal Procedure" in para 18.69ff.

The Procedure Followed

In this case the Assembly *did* receive the complaint, ruling that it *did* appear that there might be grounds for complaint or a charge of misconduct, and therefore referred the matter to the Court of Assembly and appointed the two Representatives to present the complaint. *By this decision of Assembly, therefore, the option in para 18.60 fell away as unnecessary.*

When the Court of Assembly met to consider the complaint (and other matters) on 1 September 2016, however, it decided, contrary to the Assembly's decision and contrary to the *Manual* at several points:

- that the Assembly had "failed" "to appoint a committee to investigate whether there was a legitimate charge to answer (18.60)";
- that such a committee did need to be appointed to investigate the charges;

- that it would therefore ask the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of the General Assembly to “appoint a Commission, in terms of para 18.60, to investigate the accusations against the Rev. Prof. JLP Wolmarans to determine whether there is a charge to be answered and, if there is, to administer the ‘Informal Procedure’ outlined in paras. 18.63-68”;
 - that “the report” of the committee “must be received by the Court of Assembly”; and
 - that the Moderator should “report on this action to the Executive Commission in 2017”.
- (All the quoted wording is from a letter of the convener of the Court to Brent Russell dated 17.3.2017.)

The Moderator acceded and appointed a committee of three persons: Dr C.N. Mkandawire (convener and chairperson), Elder H.G. Booysen (scribe) and the Rev. R.C. Blackwell as an additional member. The convener of the Court and the committee itself, however, apparently were, or then became, confused about the nomenclature, as in correspondence with the Assembly Representatives the convener of the Court subsequently called the committee both a “committee” and a “commission”, and the committee renamed itself a “commission”.

The committee/“commission” proceeded to meet with Prof. Wolmarans, put the complaint to him, and listen to his defence and then compiled a report that exonerated him on every charge. The Court met again on 11 May 2017 together with the Assembly’s Representatives *inter alia* to discuss the report of the “commission”. At this meeting, however,

- Brent Russell, as one of the Representatives, made the point, not for the first time, that a committee appointed in terms of para 18.60 should report to the Assembly, not to the Court; and
- Jeremy Smith, as the other Representative, objected that it would be unfair to go ahead with discussing the report in the absence of Prof. Wolmarans, because he could not defend himself.

The Court thereupon decided that:

- found that after all it was correct that a committee appointed in terms of para 18.60 should be called a committee, not a commission; and
- decided to refer the whole matter, with the report of the committee/“commission”, to the Executive Commission.

The first point to be noted is that, by deciding in terms of the *Manual*’s provisions that “it appears that there may be grounds for [a charge of] misconduct” and referring the complaint to the Court, the Assembly obviously let the option for an investigating committee in para 18.60 fall away as unnecessary in the instance.

The second point to be noted is that the Court had no authority to overrule this decision of the General Assembly and so acted *ultra vires* in doing so.

The third point to be noted is that by approaching the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of the General Assembly to appoint such a committee, and by the Moderator’s acceding, when the *Manual* makes no provision for this, both the Court and the Moderator acted *ultra vires* in this regard.

The fourth point to be noted is that by ruling that the investigating committee should report to *the Court* and the Moderator’s acceding to this, both the Court and the Moderator acted *ultra vires* in this regard as well.

The fifth point to be noted is that the *Manual* provides that the *Court* should appoint and send “a Commission of three or more people”, of whom at least two must be ministers and at least one an Elder, to carry out the “Informal Procedure” outlined in paras 18.63-68; it does not provide for any committee appointed in terms of para 18.60 or any committee or commission appointed by the Moderator to do this. This Commission has the task of approaching the alleged offender to offer him/her “the opportunity to admit guilt (ie to confess to the whole or part of what is alleged) and to show that he/she has repented” (para 18.63). This has still not been done. In this regard too, then, the Court and the Moderator acted contrary to the provisions of the *Manual* and *ultra vires*.

The sixth point to be noted is that the *Manual* very clearly distinguishes between the committee envisaged in para 18.60 and the commission envisaged in 18.63ff. and their separate and different mandates and tasks. By confusing these bodies, merging their mandates and tasks and mandating the committee to carry out the task of the commission the Court, the Moderator and the committee/“commission” itself have all failed to stick to the provisions of the *Manual*. They have also failed to take para 18.60 seriously in that it specifically calls the body for which it provides a *committee* because it is not meant to have the powers for “recommendation, action or decision” that a commission has, or may have. (See para 13.4.)

Indeed one suspects that the Court itself decided in the end to refer the whole matter to the Executive Commission because it began to realize that it had badly messed-up the procedure and wanted the Executive Commission to sort it out somehow. One can only hope that it did not think that the findings of the so-called “commission” disposed of the matter and wanted the Executive Commission to bury it officially! What is true is that the mess-up has been so critical that it has potentially damaged the whole process.

The present Report is not intended to impugn *the motives* of the Court of Assembly in all this, however. The convener of the Court stated in his letter to Brent Russell that

Our intention, at all times, has been that the integrity of the process be maintained and that all parties be treated fairly and without favour. We also want to safeguard the UPCSA from future legal action.

But the Court can treat all parties fairly and safeguard the UPCSA from future legal action only if it follows the rules of the *Manual*, instead of flouting them, acting *ultra vires* itself, and persuading the Moderator and the committee/"commission" to act *ultra vires*.

On all the above grounds, therefore, quite apart from the actual contents or "findings" of the report of the committee/"commission", the Executive Commission should rule that the proceedings followed so far, including the appointment of the committee/"commission" and the production of its report, were gravely irregular in terms of the rules of the Church, declare them *null and void*, refuse to receive or debate the report and refer the whole matter back to the Court to proceed with as the Assembly indicated and in accordance with the rules of the *Manual*.

At the same time it is clear that the Court and the Moderator both misinterpreted the pertinent paras in the *Manual* and their powers as set out in the pertaining paras. It would therefore seem advisable for the Executive Commission to refer this section of the *Manual* to the Manual Committee for it to redraft more explicitly and clearly, so as to exclude such misinterpretations in the future. Some specific points that need attention are:

- Para 18.14: A court should report its findings and the results of these also to the Council that referred a matter to it;
- Para 18.35 needs to say clearly whether Court members can recuse themselves at any point during the hearing of a case or must stay with it to the end.
- Para 18.36 similarly needs to state clearly whether an alternate can come in half way if a member of the Court who was part of it from the beginning of the hearing has for some reason to be absent.
- Para 18.60: the exact purpose and bounds of the investigation and that it must report to the Council all need to be spelled out clearly;
- Para 18.61: the subjunctive can be misinterpreted, so that it needs to be spelled out clearly that the options for the Council are either to decide that there may be grounds for disciplinary action or to decide that there are clearly no such grounds;
- Para 18.61ff.: the duty of the Council to appoint the commission referred to in 18.64-67 needs to be mentioned in 18.61, as the present order of the paras gives the impression that the action that follows 18.61 as it now stands is para 62, and if the Assembly neglects to appoint the commission, that delays the whole matter by a year;
- Para 18.68 has an error in line 2: it should read "from whichever Council it has come" instead of "from whichever Court it has come". The para should also include an instruction for the commission to report the result of the interview with the alleged offender immediately, to the convener of *the Court*;
- The Formal Procedure (paras 18.69ff.) should include a rule that the Court must consider all the evidence that the Representative presents to it (which was not done in this instance).

The convener of the Manual Committee, when asked to check the above section of the Report, commented as follows:

I fully agree with what [the Supplementary Report] says regarding the so-called Committee or Commission. The whole proceeding is patently *ultra vires* and as far as concerns the Court or the Moderator or ExComm its recommendations should be totally disregarded – in fact, the whole report must be dismissed as a nullity.... The Court is a judicial body elected to exercise the judicial functions of the General Assembly. It borders on the bizarre to think that the Court could delegate its functions or that some *ad hoc* Committee could take it upon itself to make recommendations to the Court as to how it, the Court, should deal with the matter.

The Findings of "the Wolmarans Commission"

The report of the committee/"commission" that the Court of Assembly referred to the Executive Commission gives itself two different titles:

- The report is headed with the title "Shorter Report on Informal Disciplinary Process Conducted by the Wolmarans Commission of the General Assembly of the UPCSA".
- Just underneath that heading the report then states that its title is "Shorter Report on the Outcome of the Informal Disciplinary Procedure *in re: UPCSA v Rev Prof J.L.P Wolmarans*".

This "Shorter Report", whichever title is chosen, identifies itself as "a summary of the fully detailed report of the Wolmarans Commission titled 'Report on the analysis and conclusions reached during the Informal Disciplinary Procedure as conducted by the Commission of the 12th General Assembly *in re: General Assembly of the UPCSA v J.L.P. Wolmarans*'".

The Shorter Report then goes on to describe its purpose as being "to inform and make recommendations to the Court of the General Assembly of the UPCSA regarding formal charges of misconduct against Rev Prof J.L.P Wolmarans, tabled as a complaint at the 12th General Assembly of the UPCSA". It justifies these "terms of reference" by referring to "paragraphs 18.60 to 18.68 of the *Manual of Faith and Order* as well as:

1. the decision of the 12th General Assembly to receive the complaint against Rev Prof J.L.P Wolmarans and to refer the complaint to the Court of the General Assembly of the UPCSA;
 2. the decision of the Court of the Assembly to request the Moderator of General Assembly to appoint a Commission to investigate the charges and to follow the informal disciplinary procedure as prescribed in Chapter 18 of the *Manual*".
- (Note that the "commission" thus confuses and merges the task of the committee in para 18.60 and that of the commission in para. 18.63ff., claiming both for itself.)

The Shorter Report then proceeds to report that the "commission" had met with Prof Wolmarans

- on 9 December 2016, with Elder Ken McArthur also present as an "advisor to defendant", and
- on 26 April 2017, when the same people attended and also Elder Misha Tolkstorff as another member of the defence team.

The Shorter Report lists the following as documents considered at these meetings:

1. the allegation of misconduct against Prof JLP Wolmarans by the Rev B. Russell, dated 10 July 2016 (Notice of Motion: General Assembly 2016).
2. the allegation of misconduct against Prof JLP Wolmarans by the Rev J.R. Smith, dated 5 August 2016, a document of 6 pages under the heading Allegation of Misconduct.
3. *En Route to an Alternative, Secular Christianity* by Prof. Wolmarans (the *En Route* article).
4. *Immanent transcendence in a postfoundational religion: an impossible dream?* by Prof. Wolmarans.
5. an extract from the *Proceedings and Decisions of the 12th General Assembly of the UPCSA 2016* regarding the complaint against Defendant.
6. the *Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA*, specifically paras 18.63 to 18.68 and chapters 1 and 2.
7. a document submitted by Prof Wolmarans at the December 2016 meeting containing his responses to the initial allegations/complaint submitted by the complainants.
8. the formal charge sheet, containing a total of eight charges against Prof J.L.P. Wolmarans submitted by the two Representatives of General Assembly.
9. responses by Prof Wolmarans at the April 2017 meeting to the formal charge sheet.

It should be noted here that the Representatives of Assembly informed the committee/"commission" that there was a key *youtube* video and other evidence of what Prof Wolmarans had been teaching on the website of St Columba's Church, Parkview, and the academia.edu website, and that the committee/"commission" needed to study all this in its investigation. This evidence was noted in Jeremy Smith's original complaint to the Assembly, and Brent Russell specifically wrote to the Clerk of the committee/"commission" to repeat this information before its first meeting with Prof Wolmarans. Both Representatives emphasized this point again at a formal meeting between them and the committee/"commission" before its second meeting with Prof Wolmarans. Despite this, the committee/"commission" neglected even to look at, let alone study, this important evidence—as its convener himself subsequently acknowledged. Even in terms of what it had undertaken, therefore, it was negligent and failed to do justice to the complaint.

THE CHARGES

The following sets out:

- the commission's summary of each of the eight *charges* in the Representatives' complaint (indented and in italics, repeated here with a few minor corrections);
- the commission's summary of its own *findings* on each charge (in its own words, in regular font);
- the Task Team's *comment* on each of the findings (in numbered paragraphs, also in italics).

CHARGE 1

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans asserted that "A theistic God does not exist" which contradicts sections 3, 4, 5 and 13 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA.

Finding of the "commission":

The commission found that the terminology "theistic" is not contained in the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA, nor does it occur in the Apostle's or Nicene Creeds. The origin of the word dates back only to the 17th century. Commission also noted that the quotation in the charge which is attributed to Wolmarans is factually incorrect, in that Wolmarans did not use those words in isolation, but argued the issue of scientific, philosophical, and moral scrutiny of the concept of a theistic, intervening God.

The commission found that Prof. Wolmarans does not deny the existence of God or the godly nature of God. Since his argument was centred on the human understanding of the nature of God and not His existence, the charge must fall away.

Response of the Task Team:

This is an argument that is profoundly misled and misleading:

1. *The issue is not about nomenclature and its dating but about concepts, i.e. about what the words mean and whether that meaning applies!*

How many other words does theology use that do not occur in the Bible? Does this somehow make their use in theology invalid? The commission's argument is as much in error as if one were to assert that because the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible but began to be used only in the 2nd century, therefore the doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical, so that its denial is perfectly acceptable. Or if one were to argue that because a minister "does not deny the existence of God", it does not matter what kind of God he or she believes in and propagates—which is in fact what the commission's argument amounts to. Or if one were to assert that because Jesus did not use the specific word "grace" he failed to hold out God's grace to sinners!

The dating of the term "theism" to the 17th century or for that matter of the term "pantheism" to the 18th century and the term "panentheism" to the 19th century is thus entirely irrelevant to the issue.

2. *The "commission" lamentably fails to see what the real issue is. The Oxford English Dictionary defines theism as:*

- *Belief in a deity, or deities, as opposed to atheism.*
- *Belief in one god, as opposed to polytheism or pantheism; i.e. monotheism.*
- *Belief in one God as creator and supreme ruler of the universe, without denial of revelation: in this use distinguished from deism.*

Theism is thus the general theological term for the concept of God as the One who created the universe and is transcendent over and distinct from it, but also immanent in it in the sense that God sustains it, is active in it and can intervene in it. To deny that God is theistic thus means to deny that God works miracles, answers prayer, reveals Godself or can become incarnate in the world. Pantheism and panentheism by contrast identify the essential being of god with the being of the universe, either completely or partially. The Nuwe Hervormde Beweging to which Prof. Wolmarans belongs asserts that the god in which it believes is not theistic but panentheistic, and this accords with Prof. Wolmarans's own declared denial of the incarnation, of miracles, of the efficacy of prayer and of revelation itself. Such denial merely expresses what Karl Barth called "our constitutional inability to grasp God's incarnation" as natural human beings.¹⁾

3. *The Christian faith is not a vague belief in some nebulous, indefinable god but faith specifically in the God who chooses to be revealed in Jesus Christ. To argue therefore that if someone believes in "the existence of God" or in "the godly nature of God" is entirely irrelevant to the point that is at issue, because it is entirely compatible with belief in some non-Christian god.*
4. *In accepting Prof. Wolmarans's reduction of the biblical understanding of God as being merely a "human understanding of the nature of God" the commission itself denies and repudiates the whole Christian doctrine of revelation—as Prof. Wolmarans himself does, of course, as the logical consequence of his denial that God can or does intervene in the world.*
5. *One can understand the notion of the "moral scrutiny of the concept of a theistic, intervening God". The question "How can such a God allow so much suffering in the world?" is after all a real one. But what legitimate place do "scientific" and "philosophical" arguments have as final criteria in theology, as the commission grants? Prof. Wolmarans adduces "scientific" experiments conducted with control groups that allegedly proved that prayer for the sick fails to contribute anything to healing. Indeed in one experiment those who were prayed for actually did less well than the control group for which no prayer was offered. One can only ask, How ridiculous, banal and indeed blasphemous can you get—as though God were an object which could be subjected, or would consent to subject him/herself to experiments and "scientific" tests like a lump of coal in a laboratory? Prof. Wolmarans tries to justify this by citing I Ki. 18 but crudely misinterprets Elijah's attitude in the story. It would have been better had he paid attention to Matt. 4:1-7.*
6. *The commission appears to be completely unbothered by the fact that Prof. Wolmarans's rejection of the concept of a theistic, intervening God leads him, logically, to deny the very possibility of revelation and to exalt as his only theological authority, in place of any revelation, his own opinions based on a completely speculative, or rationalistic, reason. It has either forgotten or ignored Martin Luther's warning that when reason functions in that way it becomes a "whore" who consorts with untruth.*

CHARGE 2

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans asserted that "the resurrection was not a historical, bodily resurrection by stating that the "resurrection narratives of Jesus should be read as myth" and that the "resurrection was the result of Jesus' life being interpreted into the typical Greek of the hero", which contradicts paragraphs 2.6 and 12.2 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA as well as line 9 of the Apostles Creed and line 20 of the Nicene Creed.

Finding of the "commission":

Prof. Wolmarans stated that in his perspective, the resuscitation of a three day old (therefore decayed) corpse did not take place. Instead, he believes that the resurrection of the Christ was a spiritual event, that Jesus Christ is alive today, and that He lives in and with each believer. Commission also noted the much wider meaning of the Greek word μῦθος (*mythos*) which cannot be easily understood by the mere translation thereof as "myth" in English. The same applied to the Greek word λόγος (*logos*), for which there are several (often non-intersecting) English equivalents, depending on the context. Wolmarans further explained that a myth, in this context, must be understood as a story, using known references, to explain something for which we have no reference – it may not be factually accurate in all its details, but it does help us to understand a complex concept.

The commission did not find that Wolmarans's expressed view nullifies his acceptance of the Bible as the revelation of God to the believer: his point of view is that not everything in the Bible should be read literally, but that room must be allowed for a metaphorical interpretation. Commission notes that there is an ongoing debate among believers on the metaphorical issue as opposed by the fundamentalist point of view, but that our Confession of Faith allows for these differences. Commission found no case to be answered on this charge.

Response:

This is an equally misled and misleading argument, on a number of grounds:

1. *No one is arguing for a resuscitated corpse! That is a complete misrepresentation and a red herring.*
2. *No one has argued that "everything in the Bible should be read literally"! This is another misrepresentation and red herring. The argument is set between two false alternatives, as though there are only two ways of reading the Bible: either from a literalist "fundamentalist point of view" or in a way that "allows for metaphorical interpretation". The commission itself explicitly accepts and repeats this fallacy by stating that the "ongoing debate among [i.e. between] believers" is between "the metaphorical" point of view and "the fundamentalist point of view". This is as startlingly erroneous as the commission's acceptance of the notion that the Resurrection of Jesus must be viewed either as the "resuscitation of a corpse" or as a "spiritual resurrection" within (the minds of) believers. No believers hold that the Resurrection was only a metaphorical event, and only some believers are fundamentalist!*
4. *No one is denying that the Bible uses metaphor (and simile). Obviously parts of it are meant to be understood metaphorically, while other parts are meant literally. For that matter (Jews and) Christians have debated whether a whole book like the Book of Jonah is meant to be understood as literal history or a satirical parable. But this does not mean that the whole of the Bible or the whole of what Prof. Wolmarans calls its "master narrative" can only be taken metaphorically, if everything in it is not taken "literally"!*
5. *The basic issue here is whether the Resurrection of Jesus was*
 - *an event in any objective and real sense outside the minds of the disciples and as such one that preceded, gave rise to and was the basis of the Easter faith of the disciples—and indeed a divine event that overcame the power of death itself (I Cor. 15:54-57, II Tim. 1:10, Heb. 2:14f. or*
 - *only a spiritual or subjective event within the minds or imaginations, or in the faith, of his disciples.*

*The first view is, of course, the view of the New Testament. The second view is that of the German scholar Rudolf Bultmann, whose programme of demythologization (demythicalising) Prof. Wolmarans takes over. Bultmann maintained that "the event of Easter...is nothing other than the emergence of faith in the risen one, in which the [apostolic] proclamation had its origin".²⁾ This faith was inspired by visions, or hallucinations (like those of Joan of Arc), and the use of "the conceptuality of the Gnostic myth"³⁾ in interpreting these visions produced the apostolic kerygma (proclamation or preaching) with its notion of the Resurrection (and "the legends of the empty tomb"⁴⁾). As a Lutheran Bultmann nevertheless wants to salvage justification by faith as the subjective aspect of the "salvation occurrence"⁵⁾. **Although he regards the external nexus of causality (and natural law) as excluding any supernatural intervention in the world, he therefore, somewhat inconsistently, retains the idea that God encounters us in the Word of the kerygma and "acts on" us through this Word.** The Word opens up for us "the possibility of understanding ourselves" existentially as justified sinners⁶⁾ and through it God makes us "a new creation".⁷⁾ (Bultmann takes over the language of "existentialist" self-understanding Bultmann from the early Heidegger.) The difference is that Prof. Wolmarans is less theological and philosophical. Instead of an existentialist understanding of Christianity he seeks an, if anything, even more radical and thoroughgoing "secular" understanding of Christianity and thus substitutes the simpler notion of "metaphorical" for "existentialist". He is also attributes the derivation of the myth of the Resurrection and Ascension not so much to the Gnostic myth as to pagan myths about ancient Greek and Roman heroes.*

The commission is therefore quite correct in seeing that Prof. Wolmarans reduces the Resurrection to a myth and a metaphor. What is astonishing is that it finds no problem with that! It therefore purports to exonerate Prof. Wolmarans, but thereby actually gravely indicts itself!

8. *The argumentation about the Greek word μῦθος (*mythos*) has clearly confused and misled the commission. The word in Greek (e.g. in Plato) is used of a symbolical story or tale that contrasts with an account of an*

actual historical event as something that really happened. The clear implication of the Greek word is therefore that it is not factual but merely symbolic or figurative fiction. Hence Liddell and Scott define it as "a tale, story, narrative, legend, myth, fable", and Walter Bauer (BAGD 3rd ed.) defines it in the same way as "tale, story, legend, myth" and as "fictional narrative" in contrast with *logos* as "the truth of history". The commission should have paid attention to the (pejorative) use of the word in *Sirach* (Ecclesiasticus) 20:19 and in the New Testament in *I Tim.* 4:7 and *Titus* 1:14!

9. The commission just chooses to ignore the fact that the whole focus of the New Testament is on the crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus. The very basis of the gospel and of salvation is at stake at this point. The Christian faith stands or falls with Jesus' resurrection; without it there can be no Christian preaching and faith.

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (I Cor. 15:14,17f.)

As the Tübingen professor Jürgen Moltmann puts it, "The Christian faith stands or falls with the Resurrection of Christ, for by the Resurrection from the dead God makes Jesus the Christ and reveals himself as the 'Father of Jesus Christ'.... Christian faith in God is faith in the Resurrection".⁸⁾ The encounter of the disciples with Jesus as a living person at Easter is, in other words, the constitutive core of the Christian creed, and "'He who raised Jesus from the dead' (Rom. 11:8) is the decisive designation of the Christian God.

The British New Testament scholar C.F.D. Moule comments pertinently about "the conviction which led to Jesus of Nazareth being described with such a wealth of divine attributes":

How was it that the crucified Nazarene came to occupy such a position in the faith of Christians? The main answer lies...in the resurrection. It was this which had designated him Son of God (Rom. i.4) and had brought to his followers the assurance that his was the ultimate triumph which now only waited to be revealed. And when they reflected on this, they were doubtless led to cast their minds not only forward to his future manifestation in glory, but backwards also to his pre-existent glory...[as] the Wisdom and Word of God who had been God's agent in creation, before the beginning of time.⁹⁾

One can therefore only call the commission's finding that it "found no case to be answered on this charge" simply astonishing.

6. The commission's allegation that "our Confession of Faith allows for these differences" is entirely false. On the contrary the Confession clearly asserts that the Resurrection was an event that was not merely subjective but was an event that took place in space and time. (The term "historical" is avoided because in its strict modern use this means an event that a neutral or objective or "critical" historian could verify by means of academic historical methods, whether or not he/she had faith, which is obviously not so.) Moreover the document *Essential Doctrine* insists precisely that it was a bodily Resurrection. This means that it is not merely "spiritual" either in the Platonic sense of Jesus' "soul" being released from his body (a notion Paul is concerned to oppose in *I Cor.* 15) or a spiritual or "existentialist" or "charismatic"¹⁰ experience within the spirits or minds of the disciples. Jesus is not released from his corporality but from death, in and with his now glorified, spiritualized corporality (*I Cor.* 15:44), as "the Son of God in power" (*Rom.* 1:4) and the new man, the new creation. It is a clear rule of our Church that denial of any of the points of *Essential Doctrine* disqualifies a minister from serving as such in the UPCSA; yet the commission chooses simply to ignore this.

CHARGE 3

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans asserted that "The virgin birth is misogynistic and an insult to common sense and should be abandoned" and "The doctrine of the virgin birth is not only insulting to common sense, but also misogynistic. It should be abandoned" which contradict para 2.3 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA and line 5 of the Apostles Creed and line 16 of the Nicene Creed.

Finding of the "commission":

Wolmarans explained that, by the universally accepted methods followed by classicists and historians (which Wolmarans was by profession), an analysis of the biblical writings referring to the virgin-status of Mary, mother of Jesus, presents serious flaws: The oldest writings (the letters of Paul), as well as the oldest Gospel (Mark) do not mention the virgin birth. Commission further noted that the meaning of the Greek word *παρθένο* (*parthenos*) is also multifaceted in meaning: While in certain contexts it denotes a woman who has never had sex, it is also translatable as "young female person" or "woman of marriageable age". Commission further noted that the term "virgin" appears only twice in the *Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA*: once in the Apostles' Creed and once in the Nicene Creed, both times in the phrase "the Virgin Mary", which does not fully explain whether this is part of the nomenclature of Mary, is a description of her position in society as a young woman, or denotes a previous life of abstention from sex. Commission is of the opinion that the Church needs to meaningfully debate this matter.

While Wolmarans states that he does not believe in the virginity of Mary at the time of the birth of Jesus (i.e. pregnancy without any prior sexual intercourse), Commission found it difficult to find proof of the Church's detailed understanding of the terminology. Commission notes that many (probably the vast majority) of Christians do believe in the virgin birth. However, based on the scientific analysis applied by Wolmarans as a classicist and historian, the proven discrepancies in the historical records remain.

Commission is of the opinion that the Court of General Assembly is not the appropriate forum to engage with this matter: The Court is a judicial body, applying rigid rules and laws, while the issue of the virgin birth is a matter of faith. Therefore, Commission does not recommend that this charge be pursued by formal disciplinary action. Instead, Commission recommends that a conference be arranged where members of the Church can debate the issue (see recommendations towards the end of this report).

Response:

1. *In the first place the commission's statement that "that the term 'virgin' appears only twice in the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA: once in the Apostles' Creed and once in the Nicene Creed" is mistaken. It occurs also in the Confession of Faith.*
2. *The commission's statement that "an analysis of the biblical writings referring to the virgin-status of Mary, mother of Jesus, presents serious flaws" presumably means that such an analysis finds weaknesses in the historical-literary evidence for this. From a "historical-critical" point of view one must grant the point that the lack of any mention of the virgin birth in the earliest writings of the New Testament (Paul's epistles and Mark's Gospel) does weaken the literary evidence for the virgin birth. Indeed some critical scholars have held that the earliest draft of Lk. (Ur-Lukas or "Proto-Luke") lacked the story of Jesus' birth and began with Lk.3:1; the author then later added ch.1-2 (and all the Markan material in Lk.).*
3. *However, the statement that "scientific analysis" (presumably meaning "scientific" in the broader sense of the Afrikaans word wetenskaplike) reveals "proven discrepancies in the historical records" is the wrong way to express this. Nothing needed to be "proven" and no great analysis is needed for it to be noticed that two Gospels begin with an account of Jesus birth and two do not! Moreover this itself "proves" nothing. If one record mentions something and another omits to mention it, that constitutes no "proven discrepancy" in the sense of conflict that the statement implies. To argue from that is merely to argue from silence. To use an analogy, it would be inappropriate to argue that because Js. and Jde make no mention of the death of Jesus, this constitutes a "proven discrepancy" between them and those writings of the New Testament that do mention it or to argue that because some writings in the New Testament mention the crucifixion and others do not such a "proven discrepancy" places in question whether Jesus died by crucifixion. After all, Paul does not anywhere deny the virgin birth. On the contrary when he speaks of the birth of Jesus in Gal.4.4, he mentions only the agency of God in the incarnation (exapesteilen ho theos ton Yion autou, "God sent forth, or sent out from himself, his Son, born of a woman") followed immediately by the receptive and childbearing role of Mary ("born of a woman"), with nothing intervening, designating no room to the agency or role of any male, as though only God and the woman were involved, or at any rate only their roles mattered. Cf. Rom. 8.3.*
4. *The linguistic point about παρθένος (parthenos) likewise holds no water. In early Greek literature the word means a young woman of marriageable age, sometimes with a focus on her virginity and sometimes not. But throughout the New Testament and other early Christian literature it always means a woman "who has never engaged in sexual intercourse" (BAGD, 3rd ed., see Matt. 1:18f.,25, Lk. 1:26-37), and it is in the New Testament sense that the creeds use it. It is therefore silly to argue that the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds fail to explain whether they use the term as "part of the nomenclature of Mary" or as "a description of her position in society as a young woman" or to denote "a previous life of abstention from sex".*
5. *Prof. Wolmarans's argument about misogyny is also misguided. The attribution of virginity to Mary had absolutely nothing to do with misogyny and there is no suggestion or hint of such a motive anywhere in the New Testament. On the contrary the virgin birth denies specifically to the human male any part in bringing about the coming of Christ into the world or contributing in any way to the incarnation. (Cf. Jn. 1:13, which is concerned to make the same point about spiritual birth and uses the specifically masculine Greek word ἀνδρὸς (andros)—possibly even in an intentional analogy with the virgin birth.) Indeed it is precisely the virginal Mary who is held up as the ideal example of faith: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according as thou hast said" (Lk.1:38).*
6. *The somewhat involved argumentation of the "commission" on this matter is in any case unnecessary. If it were more concerned about the confessional stand of the Church, it would have noticed and could simply have pointed out that the virgin birth is not listed in the specific points of Essential Doctrine to which all UPCSA ministers are bound to subscribe. (This is because of the critical issue and because Paul and other New Testament writings do not make it a fundamental issue of faith like the Resurrection, for instance.)*
7. *At the same time it is to be deplored that the commission ignores or fails to understand and take account of the doctrinal implications for Christology and the gospel that result from denying the virgin birth. The words in the creed "conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary" have to do (not with misogyny at all, but) with the basic assertion of the gospel that in divine grace God, and not man, initiated the incarnation for our salvation, i.e. initiated God's becoming Emmanuel, God with us (Matt. 1:23). The eternal Word became flesh "not of the will of the flesh or of the will of man but of God". In other*

words the line in the creed "conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary" means that this conception and birth took place not by any human initiative and action but by God's initiative and special action. In Christ God "creates within creation a new beginning, a new beginning in history", specifically in the history of Israel. The incarnation thus takes place not through what humankind itself can accomplish but through the Holy Spirit, just as that is true of the new birth of all who become the children of God of which it is the basis. All active human co-operation, all synergy, is excluded in the act of incarnation, which is the basis of all salvation; it takes place sola gratia. The only human co-operation in the matter is that Mary accepts the conception and does so with the words, "Be it unto me according as thou hast said." (The words "born of the Virgin Mary" also indicate that Jesus comes from this human being and becomes a human being like us.)

8. The story of the virgin birth in the Gospels has nothing to do with myths of procreation in the history of religion, as Prof. Wolmarans alleges. The accounts in the Gospels were written not in a pagan context but in a Jewish context in which the pagan myths were rejected with contempt. The story is also entirely different from the pagan myths. Here God takes the stage as the Creator working through the Spirit, not, as in the pagan myths, as a sexual partner to the virgin.
9. The commission's argument that the Court of General Assembly "is not the appropriate forum to engage with" matters of faith because it is "a judicial body" is extraordinary. Precisely that task is an important part of the raison d'être of the Court. Thus the Manual lists "teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church" as the first and primary ground for the discipline which the Church Courts are set up to exercise (para 18.4). The commission by contrast seems seriously to take the stance that no Church Court should ever sit in judgement on issues of faith and heresy—that such issues should merely be "debated" (to use its own word) at conferences and be left at that, no matter how radical the heresies are! A far cry indeed from John Knox's view that the disciplining of doctrine and conduct is one of the three essential marks of the true Church!

CHARGE 4

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans asserted that the doctrine of the atonement is false and should be abandoned and that "the violent doctrine of the crucifixion as redemption for our sins should be abandoned" and that "The traditional master narrative of Christianity has been shown to be false in all aspects: the inspiration of Scriptures, the Fall of humankind; the Incarnation of Jesus; and the doctrine of Atonement." Which contradict paragraphs 2.1, 2.5, 6.14, 7.14, 7.16, 9.4, of the Confession of Faith of the UPCS and line 18 of the Nicene Creed.

Finding of the "commission":

The charge misrepresents the actual wording of the article: Wolmarans did not state that "the doctrine of the atonement is false and should be abandoned". Wolmarans explained that this statement in his article centred on the violence component of the crucifixion, as if God needed to be appeased by Christ's suffering and death. He argues that the emphasis is often placed upon the wrong aspect surrounding the road to the cross: Wolmarans' opinion is that believers should focus upon the self-sacrificial aspect, by which Christ willingly gave Himself to die for us in order to save us from sin and open up a way to God and the afterlife.

Commission notes that the charge itself reflects a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the meaning of Wolmarans' article. The formulation of the charge is misleading and false to that extent. This charge is without merit and must fall away.

Response:

1. In the abstract or summary of his paper "En route to an alternative secular Christianity" Prof. Wolmarans asseverates:

The traditional Christian foundational beliefs (e.g. that a theistic God exists, that God reveals Godself in the Bible, and that reality is dualistic in nature), as well as Christianity's typical master narrative (the Fall, Redemption and Final Judgement), do not stand up to scientific, philosophical, and moral scrutiny.

The commission astonishingly chooses to ignore this and other statements like it and expresses not even the mildest censure of any of them, as though such outright denials of the fundamentals of the faith and the classical doctrines of the Church are of no consequence at all! Instead it is quick in every instance to exonerate his teaching at every point.

Lest Prof. Wolmarans's distinction between "myth" and "logos" or between what is metaphor and what is literal confuse anyone in this respect, it needs to be made clear that the issue here is not whether one understands the story in Gen. 3, or thinks of the Fall, as a literal event in history or whether one accepts or denies the palaeontological evidence for evolution; it is whether one accepts, in the words of the Confession, that "as the story of Adam and Eve portrays,...the tragic paradox is that humankind has from the beginning yielded to temptation and turned away from God..." etc. It is whether one accepts that in

order to remedy this situation and redeem humankind God became incarnate. It is whether one accepts that Christ died for our sins, was raised from the dead and was exalted as Lord over the whole cosmos. The problem is that Prof. Wolmarans dismisses all of this as so much theological myth. Of course the Bible uses metaphors. To say that Christ is exalted to God's right hand, for instance, is to use a metaphor; it does not mean that God literally has a right hand; instead it affirms what is not a myth but a fundamental part of the faith.

2. As far as the atonement specifically is concerned, the commission has let itself be misled again. One can argue about different understandings of the atonement, but the commission should have focused on the fact that Prof. Wolmarans does not believe that Christ's death in any way made any real difference either to God as far as our sins are concerned or to our relation with God; instead he regards that idea as all theological myth.
3. One can only ask in view of the commission's failure to find any fault with any statement by Prof. Wolmarans: would the denial of anything at all then disqualify someone from the ministry in the commission's eyes? In this regard in conversation after the meeting of the Court on 11 May 2017 Brent Russell asked the convener of the "commission", "Is there anything then that you would consider a chargeable offence as heresy?" and the convener answered "No."

CHARGE 5

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans asserted that "the doctrine of divine inspiration is untenable" and that "The traditional master narrative of Christianity has been shown to be false in all aspects: the inspiration of Scriptures; the Fall of humankind; the incarnation of Jesus; and the doctrine of Atonement." Which contradicts paragraph 15.2 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA.

Finding of the "commission":

Wolmarans explained that his view of the divine inspiration of Holy Scriptures is that the Bible was written by human beings, each with a cultural and personal background and experience. It is his opinion that the actual words so written and taken up in the Bible were the words generated by these human writers, as opposed to "a fax from God". This would explain certain items which could be linked to the local culture at the time and place, which are no longer applicable in modern culture and society.

Commission considered the meaning of the word θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*), noted that the word does not occur in the Old Testament at all, and that (Liddell & Scott *A Greek-English Lexicon* 1968, Oxford at the Clarendon Press) list only four occurrences of the word, all New Testament or later, which explains the limited references in the interpretation of the word. For this reason, Commission found it difficult to accept that *theopneustos* could only be translated in the way it seems to be understood in Charge 5, and came to the conclusion that an alternative translation is certainly possible.

Commission further noted that paragraph 6.9 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA states: "The Scriptures are inspired by the same God who accepted the constraints of the incarnation. Thus, though inspired by the Spirit, the Scriptures are at the same time fully human documents". This does not seem to present a discrepancy with Wolmarans' article. Since Commission found no material disagreement between the declared faith of the Church in this regard, the charge must fall away.

Response:

1. The commission here again allows itself to be deluded by an argument set between false alternatives. No one is asserting that the Bible is "a fax from God" or that it was not shaped by the cultures, mind-sets and experiences of its human authors.
2. The discussion of the exact meaning of *theopneustos* is another red herring. Whatever precise nuance of meaning it has in its one New Testament use (II Tim. 3:16), it means inspired by God. (See BAGD, 3rd. ed. ad loc.) But the issue is not the meaning of one word in one particular text or for that matter which particular writings it is referring to; the issue is whether the Bible as a whole is in any way divinely inspired as a witness to revelation, or the Word of God, which means specifically to Jesus Christ and "the master narrative" of the gospel. It is this that Prof. Wolmarans denies.
3. The commission's assertion that Clause 6.9 of the Confession of Faith is compatible with Prof. Wolmarans's assertion is one more astonishing statement, in its blindness to the plain contradiction between the two. It is difficult to understand how people who are able to read can make such an assertion.

CHARGE 6

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans asserted that the Bible is largely a work of fiction including much of Jesus' miracle

working and the stories of Jesus birth as well as that his death and resurrection are based on interpretations of Jesus' life in light of Greek Roman mythology, which contradicts section 6 and paragraphs 15.2 and 22.1 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCS.

Finding of the "commission":

To a large extent, the content of this charge is covered by the Commission's findings in Charge 5 above. Furthermore, Commission notes that the charge alleges that Wolmarans is guilty of "teaching" the points of view in his article – this is factually incorrect, as he quoted the opinions of other scholars. Commission further notes that, at least as far as the work of Karen Armstrong is concerned, Wolmarans is actually encouraging a return to older, pre-20th century Biblical interpretation. Commission finds that this cannot constitute misconduct and the charge must fall away.

Response:

1. *The content of this charge is in fact by no means simply "covered by the Commission's findings in Charge 5 above" as the commission alleges!*
2. *It is false to allege or imply that such teaching occurs merely in Prof. Wolmarans's quotations of other scholars. No one is objecting to statements quoted merely to illustrate other writers' points of view. The point is that Prof. Wolmarans quotes them specifically in support of his own point of view and identifies how own point of view with theirs. Indeed he quotes these other writers as though they are authorities whose views without any further question settle the matters in discussion.*
3. *Whether Prof. Wolmarans himself "is guilty of 'teaching' the points of view in his article" in support of which he cites various authors, and how perverse the judgement of the "commission" is in denying that he associates and indeed identifies his own point of view with theirs can be judged from the following brief quotation. After citing Karen Armstrong in opposition to a literal understanding of the Bible, Prof. Wolmarans goes on to state:*

We have to include here the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. Gerd Lüdemann demonstrates that the sources for the story are in contradiction and show the typical features of a myth. Most recently Dag Øistein Endsjø demonstrated that the success of early Christianity was, in part, due to the fact that its ideas of a bodily resurrection resonated with Greco-Roman popular religion. In 2002 I argued that the story of Jesus's resurrection was the result of Jesus being interpreted into the typical Greek pattern of the hero (who was supposed to have had a virgin birth, went on a journey, died, descended to Hades, was resurrected and ascended to heaven). The implication should be clear: resurrection narratives should be read as mythoi [myths].... The well-known words come to mind: "Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."

4. *Does the commission really, like Prof. Wolmarans, take Karen Armstrong as an authority on biblical interpretation? She is an ex-nun who self-confessedly lost her faith, became an atheist, and then returned to being "religious" but not specifically Christian. She is a highly intelligent and compassionate journalist and historian of religion but hardly a Christian theologian; nor does she claim to be one. Prof. Wolmarans's (in his "En route..." article) quotes her to the effect that the literal or fundamentalist reading of the Bible dates from only about the end of the 19th century, and that prior to this non-literal methods like allegory and typology were used to interpret it.¹¹⁾ But this is misleading. Medieval scholars interpreted Scripture as having actually four levels of meaning: the literal, the allegorical, the tropological or moral, and the anagogical. It was not scholars in the 19th century who first taught the Church to abandon this complex approach but the humanist and Reformation scholars of the 16th century who regarded it as capricious and fanciful. John Calvin, for example, insisted that exegesis should stick to the plain meaning of Scripture and "the simple sense of [its] words".¹²⁾ And Luther took the same attitude before him.¹³⁾ Fundamentalism did harden the literal approach in some ways but this was in reaction to a modernist approach that failed to take Scripture seriously. In any case it is a complete non sequitur and fallacy to argue that we are therefore compelled to choose between a fundamentalist approach and Prof. Wolmarans's "mythical" approach as the only alternatives.*
5. *Is the commission seriously suggesting that we revert to the pre-Reformation allegorical method of interpreting Scripture, as its argument implies?*
6. *If the commission itself finds it acceptable that the death and resurrection of Jesus is just a story based on Greek and Roman myths, then the commission disqualifies itself and the ministers and Elder on it should really resign their offices.*

CHARGE 7

Teaching which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans asserted that "The bible as a dubious source of moral behaviour", concluding "that it is impossible to accept the bible any longer as the ultimate source of moral behaviour", which contradicts paragraph 15.2 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCS.

Finding of the "commission":

Wolmarans explained that his view of the Bible as a source for moral behaviour is that it encourages certain kinds of behaviour which are unacceptable in modern society. He cites several examples, such as misogynist practices, burning of witches, slavery, religious intolerance, and more. His view is that the Bible should be regarded, instead, as a source of holy behaviour.

Commission notes that paragraph 15.2 of the Confession of Faith of the UPCSА does not contradict Wolmarans' statement. Commission finds no disagreement with the faith of the Church and the charge must fall away.

Response:

1. *The commission's argument here is so poorly stated that the third sentence flatly contradicts the preceding two.*
2. *The argument is in any case again fatuous. There is immoral behaviour in the Bible, and some ethics in the Old Testament falls short, sometimes even far short, of what the New Testament teaches. But that does not logically mean that the Bible cannot be an ultimate source of morality. Here the commission again falls for Prof. Wolmarans's line that the Bible is either the Word of God in a fundamentalist, or infallibilist, sense or else is not to be taken seriously in any way except metaphorically. But the point is that Scripture is the authoritative witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, who is our ultimate source and criterion of morality. In this sense we must take seriously Luther's statements that the Bible is the Word of God in so far as its sole and entire content is Christ: "It is not to be doubted that the whole of Scripture focuses on Christ alone (auf Christum allein ist gericht)." "Take Christ out of the Scriptures, and what more will you find in them?"⁽¹⁴⁾ The commission should read Article 6 of the UPCSА Confession of Faith more carefully.*
3. *It is also fatuous to assert that clause 15.2 of the Confession "does not contradict Wolmarans's statement", when Articles 6, 12, 16, 17, 21, 25 and 26 clearly all do!*

CHARGE 8

Conduct which injures the unity and peace of, or contravenes the law and procedures of, this Church in that Prof. Wolmarans published and circulated the documents of the internet titled En Route to an Alternative, Secular Christianity (under the title of a minister of the UPCSА) and Immanent transcendence in a post-foundational religion: an impossible dream? Both documents express views overtly contradicting the UPCSА Confession of Faith and the Apostles and Nicene Creeds.

The resultant controversy arising from the circulation of these teachings has created tensions within the denomination and damaged relationships and interpersonal trust between members and certain Presbyteries of the church.

Finding of the "commission":

Commission found this charge vague and without substance, as no indication of actual injury, tension, or damage to relationships or trust could be discerned from the charge. Commission has also not become aware by external means of such occurrences within the UPCSА directly caused by the articles of the accused. Since there is no substance in the charge, it must fall away.

Response:

1. *This is another astonishing argument. How can the charge be "vague and without substance" when the two documents of Prof. Wolmarans referred to do so blatantly and repeatedly contradict the Creeds and the Confession of Faith? The failure of the "commission" to see this can only be owing to its determination not to see.*
2. *The commission deflects attention from this contradiction by focusing on the question of tensions provoked by Wolmarans's teaching and denying that it is aware of any such tensions. But it must surely know of the tensions that this have been provoked between the Presbytery of eGoli and the Presbytery of the Western Cape, and between the congregation of St Columba's, Parkview, and the denomination, even if it does not know of other tensions.*
3. *So far from there being "no substance" in the charge, the controversy is extremely serious and constitutes. It not only makes a mockery of the Church and its faith but constitutes a grave threat to its stability and unity. In the first place, if the findings of the "commission" are accepted by the Church, what would the ecumenical implications for our denomination be? Do we really think that the Church Unity Commission or the World Communion of Reformed Churches, as a body of confessional Churches, or the World Council of Churches, with its confession of faith, would be happy to continue to accept the UPCSА as a member?*

Even more pertinently, a number of ministers and congregations within the UPCSА, possibly even a great many and possibly even one or more whole Presbyteries, will simply find it impossible to remain in a

Church that condones the heresies which the commission so easily, so smoothly and so astonishingly condones and exonerates. They will in all good conscience be unable to accept being members of a Church that so blatantly flouts its own Confession of Faith, treats it as of no consequence and reduces it to being a meaningless document that sets no standards for its ministers and members.

Finally, the "commission" should ask itself: does it really think that the Church could continue to survive at all, if all that it had to proclaim to a troubled world were the utterly attenuated "secular Christianity" that it has been so determined to exonerate and justify against all criticism? Who would even bother to pay attention to such thin and insipid theological gruel?

Endnotes:

¹⁾ K. Barth: *The Göttingen Dogmatics. Instruction in the Christian Religion*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), p.168.

²⁾ R. Bultmann: "New Testament and Mythology: The Problem of Demythologizing the New Testament Proclamation" in R. Bultmann: *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, selected, edited and translated by S.M. Ogden (London: SCM, 1985), p.39. The German reads: *nichts anders als die Entstehung* [literally, coming into existence] *des Glaubens an den Auferstandenen, in dem die Verkündigung ihren Ursprung hat* (R. Bultmann: *Neues Testament und Mythologie*, p.46f.). Reginald Fuller's clever earlier translation is "the rise of faith in the risen Lord" in H.W Bartsch (ed.): *Kerygma and Myth* (London: SPCK, 1957), p.42.

³⁾ R. Bultmann: "The New Testament and Mythology" in S.M. Ogden (ed.): *op. cit.*, p.38.

⁴⁾ R. Bultmann: "The New Testament and Mythology" in S.M. Ogden (ed.): *op. cit.*, p.37.

⁵⁾ R. Bultmann: "The New Testament and Mythology" in S.M. Ogden (ed.): *op. cit.*, p.40.

⁶⁾ R. Bultmann: "The New Testament and Mythology" in S.M. Ogden (ed.): *op. cit.*, p.39.

⁷⁾ See R. Bultmann: "Theology as Science" and "On the Problem of Demythologizing" in S.M. Ogden (ed.): *op. cit.*, especially p.54f., 102, 111-114.

⁸⁾ J. Moltmann: *Wer ist Christus für uns heute?* (Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser, 1994), p.64.

⁹⁾ C.F.D. Moule: *The Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary. The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (London: CUP, 1957), p.3f.

¹⁰⁾ Cf. H. Küng: *Das Christentum. Wesen und Geschichte* (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 2nd ed. 1994), p.62.

¹¹⁾ See K. Armstrong: *The Bible. The Biography* (London: Atlantic, 2007), p.3. One must, however, applaud Ms Armstrong's strictures on the dangerous and indeed appalling ways in which American fundamentalists like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell have misapplied the Bible: see p.212-216, 222.

¹²⁾ Quoted by J.L. Thompson: "Calvin as a biblical interpreter" in D.K. McKim (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), p.58-73.

¹³⁾ See P. Althaus: *Die Theologie Martin Luthers*, 1st ed., p.76.

¹⁴⁾ Quoted by P. Althaus: *Die Theologie Martin Luthers*, p.73.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. Some developments took place in the ecumenical space since the submission of the initial report to the Clerk of the General Assembly. This report will cover few and critical aspects that should come to the attention of the Executive Commission.

UCCSA/UPCSA UNION NEGOTIATIONS

2. The Negotiations Teams of the UCCSA/UPCSA met on the 24th May 2017 to receive and discuss a report from the sub-team. The following was agreed as the road map for the process of negotiations:

2.1 **Ceremonial Launch of the New Journey.** The ceremonial launch had been planned for the 19th February 2017 and the 2016 General Assembly had agreed on the arrangement, but due to logistic reasons it could not occur. The new date will be Sunday the 1st October 2017, at the General Assembly of the UCCSA in Durban. The members of the negotiations team and the Moderator of the UPCSAs will participate in the launch. The members of the two churches in KwaZulu Natal will be encouraged to attend or to send representatives to witness the launch of the journey. It is envisaged that the launch in this manner will also accomplish the healing and reconciliation, as the failure to unite in the 1980's caused hurt and disappointment to many.

2.2 **Involvement of the Congregations in the Launch.** On the same day, the 1st October 2017, the Congregations of the two churches will be asked to hold/conduct covenant services and prayers (as part of their normal services) where, as a way of observing this milestone, they will commit themselves to and pray for the process. The congregations of the two churches that exist close to one another are encouraged to hold joint services on that day. A short liturgy for that special service will be drafted and circulated to all the congregations of the two churches. The Congregations/ Regions/Presbyteries/Synods and Associations will be encouraged to work together deliberately, from the day of the launch until the unity is realized.

2.3 **Joint Letter to the Congregations.** The two General Secretaries had been tasked to write a joint letter to all the congregations of the two churches to apprise them of the developments and to encourage them to support the whole process. The letter was circulated to the UPCSAs on the 1st June 2017.

2.4 **Joint Theological Statement.** There will be a joint brief theological statement on the justification of the union between the two churches. The statement will be a way of encouraging people to respond to God's call for the unity of the Church, admitting the human failure on the previous negotiations and making a fresh commitment to pick the process up again. The statement will be out by the time of the Executive Commission and will be presented with the report.

2.5 **Quarterly Bulletin.** There will be a quarterly bulletin that will help to build the momentum and to keep people informed. The two General Secretaries will be responsible for the issuing of the quarterly bulletin, and the first issue will be out in August 2017.

2.6 **Structures/Task Teams.** The meeting agreed that the Negotiations Team should be named "Joint Commission on Union (JCU)" (of 12 members; 6 from each Church) and the Sub-Team named "Steering Committee" (of 6 members; 3 from each Church). It was further agreed to establish the task teams to pay special attention to the critical aspects of the Union. The Churches are requested to identify two people that will serve on each of the task teams. The task teams will be coordinated by the members of the "JCU". The following scheme was proposed for presentation at the 2017 UPCSAs Executive Commission and 2017 UCCSA General Assembly for adoption and for the appointment of the members:

- a. Doctrine/Worship/Liturgy – creeds, confessions, covenants, catechism and membership coordinated by the Rev H Petersen.
- b. Ministry and Mission – Training, Formation, Placement, Lay and ordained ministry, and welfare and development coordinated by the Rev M Ramulondi.
- c. Constitution/Manual/Polity – structures (councils) coordinated by the Rev R Armstrong.
- d. People's Movements and Ministries - Associations and Organisations coordinated by Mr V Letuka.
- e. Finance and Property – Remunerations/emoluments - Stipends, Pensions and registrations coordinated by Mrs K Nxumalo.
- f. Ecumenical Relations – Local and Global coordinated by the Rev M Cook.

2.7 **Consistency.** It was agreed to request the Churches not to change the membership of the Joint Commission on Union and the Task Team, so as to ensure consistency.

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WCRC) ON JOINT DECLARATION ON THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION (JDDJ)

3. One of the highlights of the WCRC General Council that will be held at Leipzig, Germany in June/July 2017 will be the signing of the statement for association with the JDDJ. Attached to this report is the letter that came from the WCRC Secretariat detailing the processes that were to be followed (and that were followed) leading to the taking of the decision to sign the Declaration. Also attached is the document that contains the WCRC's draft statement on the association of the WCRC with the JDDJ.

4. The UPCSAs have to follow this development closely as it ushers in a new dynamic in the ecumenical milieu. The concerned churches in South Africa started engagements on how to relate and interact after the Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists and Anglicans, worldwide committed to JDDJ. The churches that are in consultation include the Catholic Church, Lutheran Church of South Africa, Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa, Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. With the current WCRC development, the UPCSAs and the UCCSA have just been invited to also participate in the discussion and the Rev Zwai Mtyhobole was mandated by the ERC to attend on behalf of the UPCSAs. It is recommended that the Executive Commission endorses the process of discussions around the JDDJ and the related issues and that the ERC should ensure continuous representation of the UPCSAs therein. It is envisaged that the churches in Zimbabwe and Zambia may also enter into similar discussions. The Executive Commission should instruct the ERC to ensure that the UPCSAs participate through the Synod of Zambia and the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, if/when that happens. It is further recommended that the Executive Commission should request the Faith and Order Committee to study the JDDJ and prepare a user-friendly guide for the members of the UPCSAs to understand the dynamics and implications before the next General Assembly.

AFRICAN PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN AND MEN'S CONFERENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA - 2018

5. The Presbyterian Women's Group in Africa, called Tumekutana, will hold their Conference in South Africa in 2018. The UPCSAs have been requested to facilitate the holding of the Conference. The details will be forwarded in terms of the support that is required from the UPCSAs.

6. The Pan African Presbyterian Men's Fellowship (PAPMF), a Presbyterian Men's movement in Africa, which the MCG is an affiliate of will also hold their Conference in South Africa in 2018. The dates for both Conferences have not yet been finalised. In the spirit of promoting ecumenism and the growth of the church in Africa, it is recommended that the Executive Committee agrees to offer moral and diplomatic support to the Conferences. Diplomatic support may include, and not limited to, the writing of the letters of invitation and to facilitate the granting of Visa for those members that may require Visa to enter South Africa.

ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

7. The socio-economic and political dynamics in South Africa pressed the SACC to a prophetic action. The SACC set up its Unburdening Panel team to listen to people that wanted to tell what they know about the state capture, corruption and other issues of poor governance. The report has since been released and a lot has been uncovered. The Church and Society Committee should be encouraged to study the report and follow up on the events arising from that, so as to keep the UPCSAs abreast of the developments in South Africa.

8. The SACC successfully held its Triennial Conference over the period 6-8 June 2017. Bishop Zipho Siwa was elected as the President, Dr Frank Chikane as the 1st Vice President and Mrs Magwaza as the 2nd Vice President. Ms Karabo Mamabolo, a UPCSAs young person has been elected to serve as one of the twelve (12) additional members of the National Executive Committee. The resolutions of the Conference will be circulated as soon as they are made available. The UPCSAs should congratulate the new National Executive Committee and pledge its support to the leadership.

CHURCH UNITY COMMISSION

9. The report of the Church Unity Commission (CUC) is attached for the members to follow the developments. The Executive Committee should encourage the Presbyteries, Congregations and the Associations to understand the provisions of CUC for ministry and other aspects of the unity of the Church.

CONCLUSION

10. The ERC has followed the developments in the ecumenical sphere and ensured that the UPCSAs stay afloat. The UPCSAs have been and will be represented in all the ecumenical bodies that it is affiliated with.

**THE REV L MPETSHENI
GENERAL SECRETARY**

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the progress made in the UCCSA/UPCSA union talks.
3. The Executive Commission
 - a. approves the arrangement for the ceremonial launch to be held in Durban on the 1st October 2017 at the General Assembly of the UPCSA;
 - b. encourages the UPCSA to commit themselves to and pray for the process and those close to UCCSA congregations to hold joint services on 1st October 2017; and
 - c. encourages Congregations/Regions/Presbyteries/Synods and Associations to work together deliberately from the day of the launch until the unity is realized.
4. The Executive Commission approves the names "Joint Commission on Union (JCU)" for the Negotiations Team and "Steering Committee" for the Sub-Team.
5. The Executive Commission
 - a. approves the six (6) proposed task teams and the coordinators;
 - b. asks the Nominations Committee to nominate two (2) members to serve in each of the task teams; and
 - c. agrees to ensure consistency by not changing the members that serve in the JCU and task teams, unless there is a pressing reason to do so.
6. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that the WCRC will sign the statement for association with the JDDJ at the General Council at Leipzig, Germany;
 - b. supports the participation of the UPCSA in the discussions by the churches in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe on the relations based on the JDDJ and related matters and instructs the ERC to ensure continuous representation of the UPCSA in those discussions; and
 - c. requests the Faith and Order Committee to study the JDDJ and prepare a user-friendly guide for the members of the UPCSA to understand the dynamics and implications before the next General Assembly.
7. The Executive Commission agrees to offer moral and diplomatic support to the Tumekutana and PAPMF Conferences that will be held in South Africa in 2018.
8. The Executive Commission
 - a. commends the SACC for the work it achieved through its Unburdening Panel;
 - b. instructs the Church and Society Committee to study the report and follow up on the events arising from that, so as to keep the UPCSA abreast of the developments in South Africa; and
 - c. instructs the General Secretary to write a letter to congratulate the new National Executive Committee and pledge its support to the leadership.
9. The Executive Commission
 - a. receives CUC report;
 - b. congratulates the Rev Dr Peter Langerman on being re-elected as the CUC Chairperson; and
 - c. encourages the Church Councils and Associations to follow the CUC developments for the unity of the Church.
 - d. Agrees to the admission of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) as a full member of the CUC.



LIVING GOD
**RENEW AND
TRANSFORM US**

World Communion of Reformed Churches

Called to communion, committed to justice

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President:
Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay

General Secretary:
Rev. Chris Ferguson

Hannover, 05.09.2016

Information to the member churches on the WCRC's association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

Dear sisters and brothers,

Greetings in the name of the Living God!

In preparation for our next General Council, to be held in Leipzig, Germany, 29 June-7 July 2017, there are several mandates from the 2010 Uniting General Council which will be coming to a completion. I would like to update you on one of these in this letter: **associating with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification**.

At its meeting in Havana, Cuba, in May 2016 the Executive Committee decided on a process which shall prepare the WCRC's association to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification during the General Council in Leipzig.

With this association the WCRC will become part of the widening ecumenical consensus on a fundamental doctrine, which already includes the Lutheran, the Roman Catholic¹ and the Methodist churches² and is affirmed in substance by the Anglican Church.³

With this letter we want:

- to share the **revised draft of the Statement of Association** with the WCRC member churches (this draft incorporates the different submissions of the first round of consultation and emphasizes particularly the theological link between justification and justice);
- to inform you about the process of decision making.

In Havana the Executive Committee reconsidered the procedure that will lead to the association. This letter repeals earlier communication about the process. We apologize for any confusion.

Please take note of the **new timeline**:

- **August – October 2016:** Consultation with member churches. **Please share your general feedback on the revised Statement of Association by 1 November 2016.**
- **December 2016:** Decision by the Executive Committee on association with the JDDJ.
- **July 2017:** Ceremony of association with the JDDJ during the General Council in Leipzig.

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

In 1999, after many years of committed dialogue, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) was signed by the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation.

In the Joint Declaration **Catholics and Lutherans state that the churches now share “a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ.”**⁴ They acknowledge that the condemnations relating to the doctrine of justification set forth by the Council of Trent and the Lutheran confessions do not apply to the Catholic and Lutheran teachings on justification set forth in the declaration.

The JDDJ establishes this “common understanding” by the **method of a differentiated consensus**.⁵ This method allows the expression of both differences and consensuses by placing the remaining differences within a still more far-reaching shared conviction. The JDDJ presents the different theological traditions but looks at them from the viewpoint of a common understanding as differences in emphasis and not in substance.

The method of differentiated consensus has a long history in ecumenical dialogue, e.g. in the Leuenberg Agreement between Lutheran and Reformed churches in 1973. The Roman Catholic Church accepted this method in the process that led to the JDDJ.

The process of association

The JDDJ praises this consensus on the understanding of justification by God’s grace as an important step on the way to Christian unity. **For this reason the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation invite other churches and ecumenical bodies to associate with the Joint Declaration.**

In the **process of association** the associating organization is invited to go through the following four steps. The associating body:

1. declares that on the basis of the JDDJ there is now a “common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ;”
2. adds its voice to the differentiated consensus and states that the different theological languages used to express the doctrine of justification in the light of this common understanding are not any longer church-dividing;
3. expresses its own emphasis on the understanding of justification as a contribution to further ecumenical dialogue;
4. and—in a common official statement also signed by the signing partners and associates of the JDDJ—affirms its commitment to strive together for the deepening of the common understanding of justification in theological study, teaching and preaching.

In 2006, the World Methodist Council and its member churches affirmed their fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the document and associated with the Joint Declaration. In 2016 the Anglican Consultative Council “welcomed and affirmed the substance of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.”

WCRC response

In response to this invitation, the Uniting General Council, meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, in 2010, recommended: “To have a consultation within WCRC to consider the possibility of **associating** with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” [emphasis added].

The issue was discussed at subsequent meetings of the Executive Committee of the WCRC. At its meeting in Havana, Cuba, in May 2016, the Executive Committee recommended to joyfully accept the invitation to associate with the JDDJ. In keeping with the Reformed principle, "*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum dei*" ("the church reformed, always reforming according to the Word of God"), the Executive Committee embraced the new ecumenical reality this shared agreement promises. At the same time the Committee resolved that the Statement of Association should emphasize the connection between justification and justice as a Reformed contribution to future ecumenical dialogue on the understanding of justification.

The revised draft of the WCRC's Statement of Association

A small group of theologians has since met and reworked the text based on responses received from some churches and the partners and has made more visible the Reformed contributions to the common understanding of justification. The headings that structure the document point to the particular Reformed emphasis that guides the WCRC's association with the JDDJ:

- "We hear the consensus and agree"
- "We particularly appreciate some of the distinctive insights in the JDDJ"
- "The Reformed have particular emphases and additional insights to bring"
- "We wish to underscore the integral relation between justification and justice"

The last two chapters on the special Reformed emphasis focuses on the Reformed understanding of law and gospel, the reliability of God's promises, the place of good works among the justified and especially on the relation between justification and justice. This last part refers to the confessions of Accra and Belhar and quotes Calvin's conviction that "believers truly worship God by the righteousness they maintain within their society".⁶

The decision-making process

As directed by the WCRC's Executive Committee, we now offer this revised Statement of Association for your feedback and comments by **1 November 2016**. In December the Executive Committee will review your responses and, if the way is clear, will take action to adopt the Statement.

The WCRC is not bound to formal decisions by its members in this case. The new timeline therefore does not set a quorum which must be reached before the final decision. At the same time member churches are not bound to this association, but are, in fact, invited to have ecumenical discussions on the JDDJ on regional level.

During the General Council a common celebration of Christian unity is proposed which will include a public signing of the Statement of Association and the common affirmation of consensus on the understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ. Details of the plans for the celebration will be sent to the churches closer to the date of the event being planned.

The Executive Committee recognized that a first draft of the WCRC's response to the JDDJ was sent to some WCRC member churches, as well as to the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. This was a draft text only. Regretting any misunderstanding that this first draft gave rise to, the Executive Committee instructed the General Secretary to inform the member churches on the new timeline for the decision to associate.

I trust that the above information is both comprehensive and clear. If, however, you have any questions about the WCRC's planned association with the JDDJ, please do let me know.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'CF', enclosed within a faint, light-colored rectangular border.

Chris Ferguson (Rev.)
General Secretary

Attachments:

- revised draft of the WCRC's Statement of Association to the JDDJ [August 2016],
- the text of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

¹ The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church can be found at: wcrch.ch/jddj.

² The World Methodist Council statement of association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification can be found at: wcrch.ch/jddj.

³ Resolution 16.17 by the Anglican Consultative Council on its meeting 8-19 April 2016 in Lusaka can be found at: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/234449/acc-16-resolutions-2016.pdf>.

⁴ JDDJ, §5.

⁵ JDDJ, §14.

⁶ Statement of Association, §19.

APPENDIX 1 (b)

LETTER FROM THE REV DR CHRIS FERGUSON – THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WCRC ON THE JOINT DECLARATION ON THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

Dear sisters and brothers,

Greetings in the name of the Living God!

In preparation for our next General Council, to be held in Leipzig, Germany, 29 June-7 July 2017, there are several mandates from the 2010 Uniting General Council which will be coming to a completion. I would like to update you on one of these in this letter: **associating with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification**.

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With this letter we want:

- to share the **revised draft of the Statement of Association** with the WCRC member churches (this draft incorporates the different submissions of the first round of consultation and emphasizes particularly the theological link between justification and justice);
- to inform you about the process of decision making.

In Havana the Executive Committee reconsidered the procedure that will lead to the association. This letter repeals earlier communication about the process. We apologize for any confusion.

Please take note of the **new timeline**:

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The JDDJ establishes this "common understanding" by the **method of a differentiated consensus**.^[5] This method allows the expression of both differences and consensus by placing the remaining differences within a still more far-reaching shared conviction. The JDDJ presents the different theological traditions but looks at them from the viewpoint of a common understanding as differences in emphasis and not in substance.

The method of differentiated consensus has a long history in ecumenical dialogue, e.g. in the Leuenberg Agreement between Lutheran and Reformed churches in 1973. The Roman Catholic Church accepted this method in the process that led to the JDDJ.

The process of association

The JDDJ praises this consensus on the understanding of justification by God's grace as an important step on the way to Christian unity. **For this reason the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation invite other churches and ecumenical bodies to associate with the Joint Declaration.**

In the **process of association** the associating organization is invited to go through the following four steps. The associating body:

1. declares that on the basis of the JDDJ there is now a “common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ;”
2. adds its voice to the differentiated consensus and states that the different theological languages used to express the doctrine of justification in the light of this common understanding are not any longer church-dividing;
3. expresses its own emphasis on the understanding of justification as a contribution to further ecumenical dialogue;
4. and—in a common official statement also signed by the signing partners and associates of the JDDJ—affirms its commitment to strive together for the deepening of the common understanding of justification in theological study, teaching and preaching.

In 2006, the World Methodist Council and its member churches affirmed their fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the document and associated with the Joint Declaration. In 2016 the Anglican Consultative Council “welcomed and affirmed the substance of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.”

WCRC response

In response to this invitation, the Uniting General Council, meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, in 2010, recommended: “To have a consultation within WCRC to consider the possibility of **associating** with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” [emphasis added].

The issue was discussed at subsequent meetings of the Executive Committee of the WCRC. At its meeting in Havana, Cuba, in May 2016, the Executive Committee recommended to joyfully accept the invitation to associate with the JDDJ. In keeping with the Reformed principle, “*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum dei*” (“the church reformed, always reforming according to the Word of God”), the Executive Committee embraced the new ecumenical reality this shared agreement promises. At the same time the Committee resolved that the Statement of Association should emphasize the connection between justification and justice as a Reformed contribution to future ecumenical dialogue on the understanding of justification.

The revised draft of the WCRC’s Statement of Association

A small group of theologians has since met and reworked the text based on responses received from some churches and the partners and has made more visible the Reformed contributions to the common understanding of justification. The headings that structure the document point to the particular Reformed emphasis that guides the WCRC’s association with the JDDJ:

- “We hear the consensus and agree”
- “We particularly appreciate some of the distinctive insights in the JDDJ”
- “The Reformed have particular emphases and additional insights to bring”
- “We wish to underscore the integral relation between justification and justice”

The last two chapters on the special Reformed emphasis focuses on the Reformed understanding of law and gospel, the reliability of God’s promises, the place of good works among the justified and especially on the relation between justification and justice. This last part refers to the confessions of Accra and Belhar and quotes Calvin’s conviction that “believers truly worship God by the righteousness they maintain within their society”.^[6]

The decision-making process

As directed by the WCRC’s Executive Committee, we now offer this revised Statement of Association for your feedback and comments by **1 November 2016**. In December the Executive Committee will review your responses and, if the way is clear, will take action to adopt the Statement.

The WCRC is not bound to formal decisions by its members in this case. The new timeline therefore does not set a quorum which must be reached before the final decision. At the same time member churches are not bound to this association, but are, in fact, invited to have ecumenical discussions on the JDDJ on regional level.

During the General Council a common celebration of Christian unity is proposed which will include a public signing of the Statement of Association and the common affirmation of consensus on the understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ. Details of the plans for the celebration will be sent to the churches closer to the date of the event being planned.

The Executive Committee recognized that a first draft of the WCRC’s response to the JDDJ was sent to some WCRC member churches, as well as to the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. This was a draft text only. Regretting any misunderstanding that this first draft gave rise to, the Executive Committee instructed the General Secretary to inform the member churches on the new timeline for the decision to associate.

I trust that the above information is both comprehensive and clear. If, however, you have any questions about the WCRC's planned association with the JDDJ, please let General Council Coordinator Rev. Dr. Hanns Lessing know at hanns.lessing@wcrs.eu.

In Christ,



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Revised Draft:

Association of the World Communion of Reformed Churches
with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

[August 2016]

Preamble

1. In recent years a welcome degree of convergence on the doctrine of justification has been achieved. In 1999, after many years of committed dialogue, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification was signed by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. This agreement, on what had been a central church dividing issue at the time of the Reformation, is a landmark achievement which we celebrate. In 2006, the World Methodist Council and its member churches affirmed their fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. The World Communion of Reformed Churches, after extended consideration and special attention to connections between justification and justice, now joyfully accepts the invitation to associate with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ). For the Reformed, justification by grace through faith is an essential teaching of the gospel.

2. We affirm our fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the JDDJ, and we express profound gratitude for the great advance that has been made in this ecumenical consensus. We rejoice together that the historical doctrinal differences on the doctrine of justification no longer divide us, and we experience this as a moment of self-examination, conversion and new commitment to one another manifesting new unity and advancing our common witness for peace and justice. In keeping with the Reformed principle, "*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum dei*," we embrace the new reality this shared agreement promises. We hope to not only affirm but also enrich and extend the existing degree of consensus. We embrace the model of differentiated consensus and the openness, diversity and richness of theological language it makes possible. We will here add our distinctive emphases to those already shared by others. We anticipate areas that invite further dialogue and clarification. We acknowledge the importance, in ecumenical dialogue, of listening to one another and listening to Scripture together.

3. There is a long and interesting history of dialogue on the matter of justification among Reformed, Lutheran and Catholic communions. In fact, a remarkable consensus on basic elements of the doctrine of justification was declared in the Regensburg Agreement of 1541 (Article V *de iustificatione*).¹ Calvin warmly welcomed this agreement (*Letter to Farel* 11.5.1541). However, because of the confessional struggle, the efforts failed and the agreement was nearly forgotten for more than 450 years.

We hear the consensus and agree.

4. We agree with the common affirmation that justification is the work of the triune God. The good news of the gospel is that God has reconciled the world to himself through the Son and in the Spirit. Justification presupposes and is grounded in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. Justification means that Christ himself is our “righteousness (δικαιοσύνη – justice) and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). According to Reformed understanding, justification and sanctification, which cannot be separated, both flow from union with Christ.

Entering into union with him through the Holy Spirit, by means of word and sacrament, we receive a share in his saving righteousness. By grace alone, through faith in Christ’s saving work—and not because of any merit on our part—we are accepted by God. In Christ the Spirit renews our hearts while equipping us to do the good works that God has prepared for us to walk in. (§15)

5. We also agree that God calls all people to salvation in Christ. When we receive this salvation by grace through faith, we are justified by Christ alone. Faith is God’s gift through the Holy Spirit. By word and sacrament in the community of faith, the Spirit leads believers into that renewal of life which God will bring to completion in eternal life. (§16)

6. We further agree that the message of justification directs us in a special way to the heart of the biblical witness. Based on God’s saving action in Christ, justification tells us “that as sinners our new life is due solely to God’s forgiving and renewing mercy. This mercy is imparted to us as a gift, which we receive through faith, and never can merit in any way.” (§17)

7. We agree with both Catholics and Lutherans that the doctrine of justification has a central place among the essential doctrines of Christian faith. It is an indispensable criterion for teaching and practice in the life of the church. We also affirm that historic differences in emphasis and interpretation on this doctrine are not a sufficient cause for division between them or between either party and the Reformed. (§18)

We particularly appreciate some of the distinctive insights in the JDDJ.

8. We appreciate the recognition in the JDDJ that we are powerless to save ourselves, incapable of turning to God on our own, and that the freedom we know is not freedom for salvation. Our response to God’s grace is itself the effect of God’s grace working in us. What Christ has accomplished by his saving obedience (*extra nos*) is made known and applied in us (*in nobis*) by the Spirit especially through God’s word and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. No one can respond to God’s call apart from God’s prior work of grace. (§19-21)

9. We appreciate the recognition that sin is both a guilt and a power; thus, God’s grace brings both forgiveness and liberation. God’s forgiveness absolves us of our guilt (justification) and God’s liberation frees us from bondage to sin so that our faith might be active in love (sanctification). Union with Christ, according to Reformed teaching, is the source of these two saving benefits. Sanctification does not entail attaining perfection in this life. We recognize the ongoing struggle—our situation of being at the same time justified and a sinner. Nevertheless, we believe that in our union with Christ “day by day, more and more” we are being conformed to his image and grow in grace. According to Reformed understanding, it is through our participation in Christ by faith that we receive a saving share in his righteousness before God (justification) and receive the gift of new life (sanctification) to be instruments of God’s love.). (§22-24)

10. We appreciate the clear presentation that sinners are justified by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8) and that faith is active in love. Grace is the source and ground of justification while faith is the instrument of its reception. The whole of the Christian life is a life of trust in the promises of God. Such faith cannot truly exist without love and hope in God. Union with Christ by faith entails both justification by grace and sanctification or growing in grace. "Faith is active in love and thus the Christian cannot and should not remain without works." Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17). Love for God and the neighbour is therefore indispensable to faith. "But whatever in the justified precedes or follows the free gift of faith is neither the basis of justification nor merits it." The grace we receive brings renewal of life. (§25-27)

11. We appreciate the honest recognition that even though we are justified we nevertheless continue a lifelong struggle against the contradiction to God which we must continually repent and for which we daily ask forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer. This struggle, however, does not separate us from God in Christ. We remain ever dependent on God's grace, through word and sacrament, throughout our lives. Grace never becomes something we merely possess. (§28-30).

The Reformed have particular emphases and additional insights to bring.

12. The Reformed agree with the strong conviction expressed that the law is fulfilled in Christ and is not a "way of salvation" for us. The law discloses our sin to us and leads us to seek God's mercy in Christ. At the same time, we understand that it is the teaching and example of Christ (who fulfilled the law) that remains the norm for life in Christ. For this reason, the Reformed maintain that the commandments of God remain valid for us in our lives as believers. This is guiding role of the law, sometimes referred to as "the third use of the law." This is the primary use in Reformed understanding—even more central than the first two: the "civil" use (to curb wrongdoing in the public arena) or the "pedagogical" use in convicting of sin. "Law and gospel" are not sharply contrasted but viewed as connected by their grounding in God's grace. This sense of connection between law and gospel echoes a Reformed emphasis on the continuity (rather than contrast) between the Old Testament and the New Testament as one covenant of grace. For the Reformed *sola scriptura* entails *tota scriptura*. Both law and gospel are God's good gifts to us. The law is God's gracious provision of a guide for living. Reformed sensibilities concerning the law resonate with those expressed in Psalm 19, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear enlightening the eyes...." The renewal of life (sanctification) that accompanies justification strengthens us to live (more fully) in gratitude and joyful obedience to God. This is a gift of God's grace at work in our lives. We may have confidence that the good work God has begun in us will be brought to completion. "Through Jesus Christ God has mercifully promised to his children the grace of eternal life." (§31-33)

13. We affirm the testimony given here to the utter reliability of the promises of God. We witness to the irrevocability of the gifts and calling of God (Rom. 11:29). God's covenant of grace given to Israel is unbroken and is extended to us by faith in Christ. The gift of faith provides us assurance of salvation. Faith without assurance would be deficient or confused. Assurance is not based upon anything in ourselves—whether faith, works or evidences of the Holy Spirit—but upon the promises of God. Our God is a faithful God who keeps covenant with the people of God through the ages. God's electing grace at work in the people of Israel is now at work in us also through Christ. For assurance we look to Christ and the promises of God in him. In times of doubt, temptation and anxiety we do not look to ourselves but to Christ. For the Reformed, assurance of salvation is particularly linked to the doctrine of election. Divine election is grounded solely in God's electing grace. In the doctrine of election we recognize God who chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). We have nothing that we have not received. Even our capacity to respond to God is God's gift to us. So

also, is our perseverance in faith. These insights evoke humility and gratitude in believers and provide assurance of salvation. God's calling and God's promises are sure. In Christ God has promised our salvation, and "the objective reality of God's promise" which cannot be considered untrustworthy grounds our assurance of salvation. (§34-36)

14. We value the careful nuancing of the place of good works among the justified. They are the fruit (and not the root) of justification. Good works reflect the effect of God's grace in us; faith that is active in love. Good works can only be done in dependence upon God's grace. The Reformed would add here a comment on how we have interpreted the place of good works among the justified. In the Second Helvetic Confession (Chapter XVI, paragraph 6) there is an explication which clarifies that good works are not done in order to earn eternal life, or for ostentation, or for gain. Rather they are "for the glory of God, to adorn our calling, to show gratitude to God, and for the profit of the neighbour." In this way, we have further elaborated the place of good works among the justified. (§37-39)

We wish to underscore the integral relation between justification and justice.

15. We wish to add a word on the relation we see between justification and justice. In 2001, representatives of the Catholic Church, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches met in Columbus, Ohio, to discuss the prospect of widening participation in the JDDJ. The thoughtful and constructive conversation held at the consultation led the Reformed to a deepened reflection on the JDDJ and to a commitment to inquire into one of our key questions: What is the relation between justification and justice? The similarity in terms invites reflection upon the nature of their connection. In the New Testament, the same Greek term (*δικαιοσύνη*, *dikaioσύne*) is used to convey both. It can be translated either as "righteousness" or as "justice." We began a series of consultations in our regional contexts about the nature of this connection. Our further discussions have been most profitable and we offer, in the paragraphs which follow, a few insights that have emerged.

16. For the Reformed, justice is not simply the ethical outworking of justification as a kind of second step; rather it is already entailed theologically in justification as such. This insight has now been elaborated in the final report of the fourth phase of the International Reformed–Catholic Dialogue, *Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent of Justice*, "That both of these meanings are conveyed with the same word reflects the fact that they are profoundly related. The one who is justified by faith is called to act in a righteous way. As a consequence, the doctrine of justification cannot be seen in the abstract, divorced from the reality of injustice, oppression and violence in today's world" (paragraph 56). Justification is, both a "declaring righteous" and a "setting right." This insight may be at the root of John Calvin's insistence that justification and sanctification are inseparable (*Institutes*, III.2.1); they are to be thought of as a two-fold grace (*duplex gratia*).² We acknowledge that the discussion of justification (in JDDJ 4.2) as entailing both "forgiveness of sins" and "renewal of life" points in this direction. We also welcome the invitation offered in paragraph 43 to further clarification of "the relation between justification and social ethics." In what follows, the Reformed intend an initial offering on this relation.

17. In the Reformed emphasis on the sovereignty of God, we have affirmed that God is sovereign over all of life (not just the narrowly religious or spiritual aspects of individual lives). We affirm with the Psalmist that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those that dwell therein" (24:1, KJV). God has entered into covenant with all of creation (Gen. 9:8-12), and God's covenant of grace intends a "setting right" that is world-embracing—including even political, economic and ecological realities. All of God's covenantal acts are acts of justification and justice. This emphasis has been lately underscored in the Accra Confession (Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth): "God has brought into being an earth community based on the vision of justice

and peace....Jesus shows that this is an inclusive covenant in which the poor and marginalized are preferential partners, and calls us to put justice for the 'least of these' (Mt 25.40) at the centre of the community of life. All creation is blessed and included in this covenant (Hos 2.18ff)" (paragraph 20).

18. This way of thinking has also been welcomed by the present partners. In the most recent dialogue with the Lutheran World Federation (*Communion: On Being the Church*, paragraph 56) we have affirmed, "There is no area in life, indeed in all creation which does not belong to Jesus Christ who sends us into all the world to be a sign of God's kingdom to preach and live the gospel of reconciliation in a common concern for justice, freedom, peace and care for the creation."³ Similarly, in the final report of the fourth phase of the International Reformed-Catholic Dialogue (*Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent of Justice*), we together affirmed: "the theological doctrine and reality of justification by faith and sanctification impels the Christian community to act on behalf of justice. The imperative for justice flows necessarily from justification and from the call of the whole Church to holiness" (paragraph 79).

19. There is a sense in which justification and sanctification may be thought of as ordered toward justice. In God's saving work things are being "set right" in lives. We are drawn into right relationship with God and into the true worship of God (*solī deo gloria*). The true worship of God finds concrete manifestation in striving for justice and righteousness in society. Thus we are drawn into the work of setting things right in the larger social world. Calvin affirmed that "believers truly worship God by the righteousness they maintain within their society" (*Commentary on Matthew*, 12:7).

20. We maintain that "the doctrine of justification cannot be seen in the abstract, divorced from the reality of injustice, oppression and violence in today's world" (*Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent of Justice* paragraph 56)." In the message and ministry of Jesus justice was central. This becomes even more obvious when we remember the frequency of the Greek term *dikaioσύνη* in the gospels and realize that (as noted above) in the many places where it is translated "righteousness" it could equally well have been translated as "justice." The Belhar Confession expresses the imperative of resisting injustice even more strongly. In Christ, God is revealed "as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people... . We reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel" (paragraph 4).

21. The doctrine of justification is vitally important for the Reformed. Calvin spoke of it as "the main hinge on which religion turns" (*Institutes*, III.2.1). We view it as being in essential connection with other doctrines. Our unity around this central doctrine is to be celebrated. We are grateful that Lutheran and Reformed Churches in some countries have recognized one another as belonging to the one Church of Jesus Christ and have declared full communion of pulpit and table. It is our deep hope that in the near future we shall also be able to enter into closer relationship with Lutherans in other places and with the Catholic Church, as well as with Methodists, in accordance with this declaration of our common understanding of the doctrine of justification.

Official Common Affirmation

In this Statement the World Communion of Reformed Churches affirms fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed at Augsburg on 31 October 1999 on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church. The World Methodist Council affirmed their fundamental doctrinal agreement on 23 July 2006.

The signing partners of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification join together in welcoming the above Statement of the World Communion of Reformed Churches which declares and demonstrates Reformed agreement with the consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification as expressed in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Building on their shared affirmation of basic truths of the doctrine of justification, the four parties commit themselves to strive together for the deepening of their common understanding of justification in theological study, teaching and preaching.

The present achievement and commitment are viewed by Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists and Reformed as part of their pursuit of the full communion and common witness to the world which is the will of Christ for all Christians.

¹ In the Article V *de iustificatione* Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed theologians (Contarini, Eck, Gropper, Melancthon, Bucer, Calvin) stated:

“But this happens to no one unless also at the same time love is infused [*infundatur*] which heals the will so that the healed may begin to fulfil the law, just as Saint Augustine [De spir. et lit., c. 9,15] said. So living faith is that which both appropriates mercy in Christ, believing that the righteousness which is in Christ is freely imputed to it, and at the same time receives the promise of the Holy Spirit and love. *Therefore the faith that truly* justifies is that faith which is effectual through love [Gal. 5:6]. Nevertheless it remains true that it is by this faith that we are justified (i.e. accepted and reconciled to God) inasmuch as it appropriates the mercy and righteousness which is imputed to us on account of Christ and his merit, not on account of the worthiness or perfection of the righteousness imparted [*communicatae*] to us in Christ.” (Translated by Anthony N. S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue. An Evangelical Assessment*, London/New York 2002, 234-235).

APPENDIX 2

CHURCH UNITY COMMISSION REPORT TO MEMBER CHURCHES - APRIL 2017

Supplementary Report to the Executive Commission 2017

1. Introduction

In a variety of combinations, the Member Churches of the Commission serve congregations in nine countries of Africa as well as the island of St. Helena. It would be difficult to establish the number of languages that are used in those churches, and to that must be added the languages spoken by the refugees who are drawn into services on a regular basis. It is important for the Member Churches to recognise the opportunity it has to unite Christians in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It is also important that this unity should be visible and effective at all levels of the Churches involved, from the interaction of the Heads of Churches, through the regional leadership of the denominations through to the interaction at community level.

2. Quest for Unity

Representatives of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church, the Lutheran Church and the Focolare movement of the Roman Catholic Church have been regular Observers at the meetings of the Central Committee of the CUC for many years, and in March 2017 the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa attended the meeting as well. The initial invitation to the mainline churches in 1968 was an invitation to engage together in the search for unity. The 50th anniversary of that original invitation will be celebrated in 2018 and it was felt by the Central Committee that there would be merit in again issuing the invitation to the present Observer Churches and others with the aim of growing the movement at a time when other attempts to develop ecumenical engagement seem to be stalled.

The celebration in 2017 of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's action at Wittenberg Castle when he first presented his 95 Theses has sparked a number of activities in Southern Africa. An ecumenical working group including representatives from the Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Churches continues to meet to consider both the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and the present Pope's most recent statement on Ministry.

3. Visits to Church National Bodies

During 2016, the Secretary General attended the UCCSA SA Synod in Pacaltsdorp and the UPCSA Assembly in East London during July. This was followed by his attendance at the MCSA Conference in Pretoria and the ACSA Provincial Synod in Benoni in September. The Chairman had also been present at the opening service at the ACSA Synod. In October the Secretary General attended the Moravian Synod in Port Elizabeth.

It is important that these visits should be used to keep the Member Churches aware of the work of the Central Committee and to help develop relationships between the Member Churches and the Commission. The personal contacts at such gatherings help to keep the Churches abreast of the developments in ecumenical work over recent years.

4. Legislation by Member Churches of the Agreements already reached

Many of the agreements that have already been reached over the years of the Commission have still to be incorporated into the legislation of the member Churches. This step is required to ensure that the leaders of subsequent generations are all aware of the implications for the churches and for their members. It will also mean that the legislation can be applied without any hindrance as circumstances arise. It is important that the details of such legislation are forwarded to the CUC Central Committee for recording in the minutes of that body.

5. Communication with Leadership of Member Churches

In the early years of the search for unity, the Churches were represented by members of their denominational leadership. Much of the work was done in sub-committees where the membership included specialists with particular gifts and responsibilities. Over the years the representation on the Central Committee was expanded to include such members which has, in practice, meant that the denominational leadership attended the meetings less frequently. It is clear that this has weakened direct communication with denominational leadership which has resulted in lengthy delays in the adoption of the work of the Commission.

6. Developments in Ecumenical Engagement

The Commission has had a busy year with particular emphasis on Theological Education and developing the programme of community engagement. Both of these issues featured at the Consultation in Randburg in August and were followed up by gatherings at Rhodes, Alice and FEDSEM during January and February of 2017. The work of developing relationships with communities throughout the country has progressed to the point that there are activities in each of the nine Provinces of South Africa as well as with a number of groups of refugees who are struggling to settle here.

The following particular engagements form the core of the work over the past year.

6.1. Second Unity and Mission Consultation

The Consultation was held at Randparkridge United Church in August 2016. The focus was on the five Trajectories of Unity and Member and Observer Churches were asked to send representatives with a clear indication that they should be people who could contribute to the discussion within the Trajectory Groups and be able to report back to their Church leadership on the issues raised at the Consultation. Time was set aside on the final morning for the CUC EXCO to meet with the Heads of Churches to follow up the very helpful interaction at the first Consultation in 2013. However, not all of the churches were able to ensure that senior members were present.

6.2. Development of Task Teams for the Trajectories of Unity

In response to suggestions raised at both of the Consultations, it was agreed that the Task Teams for each of the five Trajectories should be established with a Champion for each team who would attend meetings of the Central Committee and head a team with representatives from each of the Churches who would be able to report back to the leadership of their church and to the relevant department within their church.

It is expected that the Task Teams would promote and develop the practical aspects of ecumenical engagement within the scope of their Trajectory.

6.3. Gatherings at Rhodes/Alice/FEDSEM

See Appendix A for full report

Theological Education has been a constant concern to the Commission over several years. It has become clear that most of the Churches have some difficulty in preparing ministers for formal ministry across the countries and denominations.

It has been evident for some time that there was a need to address the issues that had led to the closing of the Faculty at Rhodes University, the move of FEDSEM from Alice to Pietermaritzburg and its eventual closure. A Committee of representatives of the Member Churches was brought together to plan the Gatherings and the Heads of Churches as well as the people responsible for Theological Education were invited as well as Alumni of the three institutions.

The Gatherings included presentations, discussions and a celebration of the Eucharist at each of the venues. The details of the work are included in Appendix A, and it was strongly suggested that a Colloquium/Indaba during 2017 to explore the situation with regard to Theological Education going forward.

6.4. Hearings for Healing and Centres of Hope

See Appendix B for full report

The work of hearings has continued to grow and develop over the past year. Regular engagements take place in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KZN, Mpumalanga, North West and the Western Cape. The work continues to engage a wide range of stakeholders including government, communities, the private sector, and increasingly representatives of the diasporas from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

There is a great need for the Member and Observer Churches to get involved in the work that needs to be done in communities across all of the countries that are served by the Commission. In addition, it is important that the Commission be assisted in terms of the financial support that is essential for getting core persons to the different meetings that are needed in the scattered communities.

6.5. Inclusion of Organisations and Associations within Member Churches

Leaders of the Women's Organisations and Associations have been meeting on the day after the Central Committee meetings for a number of years. The original intention formulated by Sheila Burnett was for them to gather to pray for the process of seeking unity as well as the leaders of the churches engaged in the negotiations. The content and format of these meetings had varied in recent years, as had the support for them. At the Central Committee meeting in November 2016, the question had been raised regarding the contribution of the Men's Associations and Organisations in the search for unity.

A meeting was arranged for 11 March 2017 at which it was recognised that there was already a degree co-operation between the different Associations and Organisations, but this could be developed within the local communities and that this aspect of the work of the Commission would best be located within the ambit of the Trajectory for Mission and Ministry in the local community.

An important aspect of the inclusion is to ensure that there are clear and direct lines of communication between the Central Committee, the leaders of the Associations and Organisations at denominational level and the local bodies within the communities.

6.6. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity material is prepared annually for the period from the Feast of the Ascension to Pentecost. It is distributed to the head offices of Churches electronically so that congregations can adapt it to the regular format of their service material. However, it is a sad reality that the material is not always distributed to local congregations timeously. This will often preclude any co-operation between local churches in preparing combined services or pulpit swaps or other celebrations of the week.

6.7. Liturgical and Preaching Material

In conjunction with Ekklesia at Stellenbosch University, Liturgical and Preaching material following the Revised Common Lectionary were prepared again for the Sundays and Feast days for Year A – Matthew with John. *Woord en Fees* and *Word and Worship* have become a regular source of material for preachers across and beyond the member Churches.

A two-day meeting arranged by Ekklesia in Stellenbosch in March 2017 gathered a number of people from the churches to explore possible additional material that might be developed to expand the use of RCL to engage with different aspects of pastoral life, weekly Bible Study material, the Catechumenate, Ministry with young people and children.

6.8. The ongoing development of United Churches

With a few notable exceptions, communication with United Churches has been sparse over the past year. A common difficulty is the reduction in the ministers who can be made available from the Member Churches to lead these important elements in the journey towards unity.

In addition, there have been discussions regarding the New Worshipping Communities that are being established through the Fresh Expressions movement. There are a number of options for such communities either being attached to a denomination, or staying independent of such a connection or being established as a United Church under the CUC.

6.9. Maintaining the Collective Memory

The development of a Collective Memory of the history of the search for unity continues, but this project will require the support of the member and Observer Churches to be able to feed in the formal responses from Assemblies, Synods and other formal responses to the resolutions that have already been adopted.

7. Financial Issues

7.1. Servicing the important projects

Hearings for Healing

The details of the project are set out in section 6.4 of this report. During 2015 and 2016 the Commission made R100 000.00 available to assist this work across the country. This was not a budgeted figure and money was provided from accumulated funds to support the work.

Ecumenical Theological Education

The Commission undertook to arrange and invested an amount of R 91 571.15 from accumulated funds to ensure that these gatherings could be arranged with the excellent support of the Rhodes and Fort Hare universities. It made it possible to arrange for speakers at all three venues who presented some challenging papers that need to be digested by those responsible for theological education.

7.2. Engagement within the communities

In addition, there needs to be input and support from the Churches operating within the communities where the 'Hearings for Healing' are starting to take root. It is essential that the local churches support the many groups that have already been set up, and assist with the practical aspects of the desperate needs that exist within their parochial and regional boundaries. The most effective work will be done by people who live within the community, and the Church remains one of the few institutions that are trusted by the community.

Further information on this work is recorded in Appendix A attached to this report.

8. Leadership of Central Committee

8.1. Election of EXCO for the period 2017 – 2020

At the March meeting the following were elected to the Executive Committee:

Chair Revd. Peter Langerman UPCSA

Vice-Chair Revd. Thulani Ndlazi UCCSA

The additional members of EXCO will be nominated by ACSA and MCSA respectively.

8.2. Appointment of Secretary General

The March 2017 meeting of the Central Committee was made aware that the Revd Keith Griffiths will be standing down as Secretary General during the course of 2017. A Search Committee was appointed including the following persons:

Revd. Peter Langerman	UPCSA
Revd. Thulani Ndlazi	UCCSA
Lay Canon Robyn Beneke	ACSA
Revd. Sikawu Makubalo	MCSA

9. Applications for additional Member Churches

There has been discussion on the process of opening the way for other Churches to become Member Churches of the Commission. The agreements that have already been established by the Member Churches will be formulated into a resolution that will be forwarded to the present Member Churches along with the applications for membership as a first step in the process of dealing with these applications.

10. Concluding Reflections

It would appear that ecumenical engagement has dwindled in recent years, and yet there have been several attempts to establish new ecumenical bodies both regionally and nationally. It is within that context that the Commission will, in the next eighteen months, celebrate 50 years since the invitation to all main line churches to come together to seek unity.

There have been some bold steps taken together, and some periods of drought during this time. The original enthusiasm to become a single United Church has waned, and yet it is evident that there is an awareness of the strength of the Christian witness in the community is strongest when local Churches are seen to be working together, and in the nations served by the Commission when the Churches are seen to be standing together to speak truth to Power.

It is vital that these two different but equal ways of presenting the gospel to the world are strengthened and seen to be consistent with our Lord's prayer in John 17, "Holy Father, keep them in your name ... so that they may be one". (John 17:11 *The Kingdom New Testament* N.T. Wright)

Appendices

A. Gatherings at Rhodes/Alice/FEDSEM Report to Church Unity Commission by Revd. Paul Verryn

Introduction

Whenever the conversation around Ecumenical Theological Education arises, the closure of the Faculty of Divinity at Rhodes and, particularly of FEDSEM, seems to present an impasse to further discussion. The issue of trust being impaired, has been a major consideration.

The committee consisting of Barney Pityana, Makhosi Nzimande, Des van der Water, Craig Morrison, Charmaine Morgan, Purity Malinga, Zwai Mthyobile, Graham Duncan and Paul Verryn decided to convene in Grahamstown, Alice and Pietermaritzburg to "Remember, Rejoice and Renew". The gatherings took place on 21st and 22nd of January in Grahamstown and Alice respectively and then on 18th February in Pietermaritzburg.

The basic outline of the programme consisted of:

- a gathering on the sites of the Faculty and FEDSEM;
- a discussion on Ecumenical Theological Education;
- a Eucharistic celebration.

The order of events differed in each context. Letters were received from previous students, staff members and governing committee members. These were read at all three events.

In all three gatherings we tried to answer the following questions:

- What have we lost?
- How do we regain what we've lost?
- How do we shift the impasse to future co-operation?

The Grahamstown gathering

In Grahamstown, Dr Donald Cragg facilitated the discussion, Dr Itumeleng Mosala preached and church heads con-celebrated in the Chapel near the old Faculty of Divinity. Dr Sizwe Mabizela enabled the catering and organising of the facilities for us. Monica Gaybba helped in co-ordinating logistics with the Vice-Chancellor's office and the press.

Dr Cragg introduced the discussion under the topic; 'Ecumenical Theological Education: its practice and effect'.

The following reflect some thoughts expressed in this event:

1. Churches to blame. They contributed the same to the Faculty for the years 1950-1980. There was little or no teaching or mentoring in terms of ecumenism.
2. There was a need to integrate theology, pastoral studies and spirituality.
3. Building of non-racial relationships.
4. The costs relating to married students became prohibitive.

What would shift us? Economics? A deeper analysis of what closed the faculty, including questions around the viability of continuing the faculty needed further scrutiny. An important factor raised was the strongly identified antagonism of the then Vice-Chancellor and his considerable power base.

We were reminded of Desmond Tutu's statement that a university without a Faculty of Theology could not be regarded as a true University. Working in silos is not sustainable. Do we consider cross-subsidisation? What is the status of Theological education in a secular state?

There is no compatibility between capitalism and Christianity. Our divisions constitute heresy.

The Alice gathering

In Alice, Prof Tinyiko Maluleke facilitated the discussion, Prof John de Gruchy preached and church heads con-celebrated. In the service Dr Mvuyo Tom, Dr Donald Cragg and Dr Itumeleng Mosala spoke about Theological Education. The service took place in St Peter's Chapel on the Fort Hare University campus - the site of FEDSEM until its expropriation in 1973. Whilst Dr Tom was still Vice-Chancellor at Fort Hare, he

organised all the logistical support for the event. The Rev Vukile Mngxuma arranged, with the Ministers' Fraternal, for catering for the event.

Prof Maluleke introduced the discussion as per the format of the previous day. The following reflect the thoughts of the event:

1. There is a fragmentation of theological education. Some Churches have resources to go it alone.
2. There is a crisis of leadership which is related to theological training.
3. The ANC's policy of non-racial, non-sexist democracy has not delivered in over twenty years.
4. Social cohesion and standards of leadership are big issues.
5. Ethics. What is happening from our pulpits and what insights do our people receive on corruption.
6. Commercialisation of religion. We are in an era of Doom Healers, U-tube Bishops and Prophets.
7. An Ecumenism of crisis. Forces us together.
8. We need to link our ecumenism to the grassroots.
9. Critical Solidarity.
10. Universities and Churches want, and need, ecumenical education.
11. Ideologies of scarcity and abundance.
12. The CUC must bring churches together in Universities. The CUC must formalise links with the Universities. Churches have a critical role to play in ensuring integrity of qualifications.
13. There must be report backs to all structures of the Churches.
14. Teaching children is important.

The Pietermaritzburg gathering

Dr Paul Verryn facilitated the discussion, Prof Barney Pityana and the Rev Lebeka-Ketshabile preached and the church heads and their representatives con-celebrated. We were hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Imbali and the Rev Lindani Sokhela facilitated our accommodation and catering for the event.

We began the day with a visit to the site of the FEDSEM, which was only accessible through the backyards of the settlement that has established itself there. As we gathered in the ruins of the FEDSEM buildings, the impact of our loss imposed itself vividly upon us. The death of our life together was felt in sadness and anger and the pain of our grief was given some time, in the silence, to be realised. The sound of the singing of the SMMS campus brought a conflicted life into the space of death. We were on sacred ground. We were led in prayer and returned to the church for our service.

After lunch, the discussion was introduced by The Revs Purity Malinga(ex-Staff) and Roxanne Jordaan(ex-student) and Prof Vuyani Vellem(ex-student). There was an energetic participation from the floor, some of which is reflected in the following:

1. There should be no basis for ecumenical theological education that derives from only an anti-apartheid narrative.
2. We need an Ethics for Social Transformation (CCLT). Black theologies based on black epistemologies. We must not think diversity, but plural versatility. Diversity is not irrelevant to ecumenicity.
3. 'Unthink' the West. Black theologies to be further developed. FEDSEM is not suppressed.
4. What broke FEDSEM was not ecumenical division, but divisions within the different denominations constituting the FEDSEM.
5. FEDSEM taught critical thinking. Read, Comprehend, Criticize what you are thinking.
6. Creating and keeping alive the prophetic voice of the Church. Challenging injustices and speaking with one voice.
7. Having knowledge of and respect for one another.
8. How do we open dialogue to include the wider church. How do we engage other Theological Institutions like CEDARA, COTT, TEEC, SMMS? Further, when and how do we engage the Pentecostal and 'extending' communities of faith?

There was a concern that the land still belongs to the church and that there could be some possibility of compensation. It has subsequently been pointed out that the government has compensated the respective churches involved in the FEDSEM conclusively. There has been a suggestion that some memorial be erected to mark the profound contribution the FEDSEM has made to the Churches and the country. Engagement with the established community on the property is also a challenge to be considered from an ecumenical standpoint.

Two further suggestions were that consideration be given to changing the name of SMMS to FEDSEM and that some form of apology be given to the people of Imbali.

Random further Considerations and Analyses

1. There was a strong motivation for a colloquium on theological education. In the light of the possibility that continued government subsidy for theological education could be threatened, important work needs to be done in healing the scars that are unresolved relating to closure and serious planning must be done in imagining future permutations of co-operation.
2. A strong opinion still prevails that the reason closure finally happened, was that the larger, more financially powerful churches took decisions that compromised the smaller, more vulnerable denominations. Power dynamics will have to be on the agenda of reconciliation. Furthermore, an

- opinion was expressed that at the time of closure FEDSEM was suffering from a pathology of Institutional Psychosis. We need to beware of romanticizing FEDSEM.
3. We will always need to ensure that we remain sensitive to our insistence on inclusiveness.
 4. A distinction needs to be drawn between seminary training which tends to be insular and university training, which is secular. There are pros and cons in both systems that need further debate.
 5. Resources that are still at our disposal in this discourse are The Joint Board and SACTE.

A huge indebtedness is owed to the Rev Zwai Mthyobile for arranging so extensively the logistics around accommodation, catering and transport for all three events. There are still a few outstanding accounts to be settled and he will produce accounts on these matters before the end of March.

One of the prevailing challenges that remains after all these events, is the challenge to the integrity of our ecumenical relationships. The ruins of FEDSEM in Pietermaritzburg expose our vulnerability and duplicity in the journey. May the Lord have mercy upon us.

Appendix B. Hearings for Healing and Places of Hope

Report to Church Unity Commission by Revd. Paul Verryn

1. Introduction

The work of hearings has continued to grow and develop over the past year. Regular engagements take place in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KZN, Mpumalanga, North West and the Western Cape. The work continues to engage a wide range of stakeholders including government, communities, the private sector, and increasingly representatives of the diasporas from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

2. Report on Engagements in Provinces

2.1 Eastern Cape

Partnerships continue with several stakeholders including the Project for Conflict Resolution and Development, a network of ministers in Port Elizabeth and there is a growing relationship with the mulwanas in PE. Further work continues in partnership with the four universities in the Province.

Recent work has included:

- Pursuing opportunities with young people from Walmer township.
- Working with representatives from Rhodes University on a range of issues related to the exceptionally high levels of rape and other issues pertaining to transformation.
- Engagement with the Xolobeni community, where there has been significant conflict and attacks relating to mining activity. Opportunities to develop a relationship with the Wild Coast Sun International institutions are being explored.
- Work with ministers and community members in Lutsikisiki, where the municipality demolished RDP Houses.
- Engagement with the South End community.

2.2 Free State

Representatives of the Anglican, Catholic and Dutch Reformed Churches continue to explore the issues of fatherless children, and the struggles ex-offenders face when re-entering communities. Substantial counselling and trauma work was also undertaken towards the end of 2016 with students who had been beaten and threatened during the Fees Must Fall protests.

2.3 Gauteng

- Orange Farm

Regular meetings are held with different representatives of the communities of Orange Farm, Palm Springs and increasingly some members from the Vaal. A wide range of issues have emerged during this work including access to title; municipal debts; unemployment; labour disputes; difficulties in regard to transport and a wide range of issues relating to documentation. Multiple social justice organisations partner with the Orange Farm Advice Office and the hearings to pursue the issues raised.

- Mabopane

Work has continued in the development of the agriculture cooperative in partnership with Sun International and the community. A preliminary evaluation of the project identified an urgent need for more young people to participate.

Tensions in the Soshunguve and Mabopane communities in regard to xenophobia remain high.

- Work continues with residents in informal settlements to the north of Johannesburg including Clay Oven and Zandspruit. The Clay Over residents remain highly vulnerable as developers continue to build on the land adjacent to the settlement. In Zandspruit serious concerns about the capacity of the Clinic to serve the population are being pursued.

2.4 Kwa Zulu Natal

- The most substantial work has taken place in KZN over recent months. This work is driven by different stakeholders and includes:
 - a. Ongoing work through the Diakonia Council of Churches and Denis Hurley Institute for Reconciliation to address the trauma experienced through xenophobia and an ongoing effort to monitor and address issues of violence in the hostels
 - b. Work with communities in Northern KZN and outside Pietermaritzburg relating to education, domestic violence and people exposure to violence
 - c. Work with traditional leaders and communities in Southern KZN with particular focus on the ANC and IFP conflicts which took place in the 80s and 90s.
- Regular meetings with representatives from the DRC and Rwandan communities have been held and hearings commenced. This work is still in its infancy and has to be carefully managed given the very high levels of vulnerability and fear which exist in the communities.

2.5 Limpopo

Little work has happened in this Province in recent months,

2.6 Mpumalanga

Work continues with the communities near EMalahleni which are adversely affected by coal mining activities. Very serious issues relating to the pollution of air, water and soil continue to be raised and addressed. Anglo Coal remains engaged in the work.

2.8 North West

Regular work with communities in the platinum belt takes place and Lawyers for Human Rights have remained an important partner in this work and to provide support to communities of workers in dispute over their employment. There are increasing reports that there is growing tension between NUM and AMCU. There are further tensions being raised among the widows of people who were allegedly killed by G4S security force.

2.9 Western Cape

This chapter meets regularly and consists of a wide range of stakeholders. These include representatives from universities, churches and members of the social work and psychological disciplines.

Work with communities affected by forced removals in District Six, Ocean View and Fish Hoek continue.

Conversations with members of the diaspora communities of DRC and Rwanda have also started in Cape Town.

APPENDIX 3

Statement of the 2017 Triennial National Conference of the South African Council of Churches, Benoni, June 6 – 8, 2017.

JOHANNESBURG: The South African Council of Churches (SACC) held its 2017 session of the Triennial National Conference at Kopanong, Benoni from Tuesday June 6 to Thursday June 8, under the theme of Nehemiah (2:17), *"Come, let us rebuild... and we will no longer be in disgrace."*

Twenty-five (25) of the major churches in the country and a number of associate member churches were represented at the Conference covering all the traditions and expressions of faith from Catholics, African Independent and indigenous churches, Anglican, Methodists, Lutheran, Reformed, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches throughout the country. Accordingly, the SACC is the most representative churches organisation in the country.

The Conference unanimously resolved, that the South African government has lost its moral legitimacy. The SACC's Unburdening Panel Report revealed to the SACC, the systemic patterns of governmental wrongdoing in the design of inappropriate control of State systems through a power-elite that parcels out contracts and other opportunities for their circles against the interests of good governance and against the common good of the South African citizenry.

The stalemate on Nkandla, especially following the SACC meeting with the President, on the 15th December 2015, points to a serious breach of public integrity. The President's stance in his defence on the matter of the expenses on his private home, seemed syndicated across government and the broad leadership of the governing party. The Minister of Police and other Government Ministers performed what seemed like a choreographed chorus in endorsing the President's position.

Parliament, the nation's mandated representatives to supervise the conduct and performance of the Government Executive, seemed to have shared in the legal portion passed syndicated across the governmental establishment, in displaying complete moral bankruptcy in the execution of their responsibilities in upholding that laws of the Land.

Against these realities, the Conference concluded that the President has caused Parliament, the country's representatives, and therefore the people of South Africa to sin. (1 Kings 14:16). In confirming the impropriety of their actions against the State, the Constitutional Court further ruled that The President, the Minister of Police and the National Assembly must pay costs of the applications including the costs of two counsel.

These are for the SACC, areas of moral concern, not to mention the very fact that no one in government thought there was an issue of inequality, poverty and homelessness in justifying a personal household development bill of nearly R250 million. Nehemiah exclaims: "What you are doing is not wrong and morally bad. Should you not walk in the fear of God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?"

The Prophet Ezekiel condemns shepherds who feed themselves and starve the flocks? He urge us too to condemn shepherds who eat the fat of the land, and clothe themselves, with the wool, slaughter the fatlings, but do not feed nor strengthen the weak sick, the broken, nor bring back what was driven away, the lost..., (Ezekiel 34:2-5)

In the light of all these, the Conference resolved to:

1. Call for Parliament to be dissolved and fresh national elections be held to secure a fresh mandate based on acceptable values and on integrity.
2. Convene a national convention that includes a broad base of South Africans to reflect on these matters and the way forward. This to provide the opportunity for a new consensus on national values, that will for once, help South Africa arrive at a common basis for a common, reconciled citizenship. This would of necessity have to address not only the governmental values and standards, but also how to hasten the establishment of a reconciled social and economic dispensation for the realization of the post apartheid promise of South Africa – a just, equitable, reconciled, peaceful, and sustainable South Africa, free of racist, tribalist, xenophobic and gender prejudices; free of corruption and deprivation, where every child born is free to develop to its God given potential.

The Conference spent a lot of time both in a special commission and in plenary, deliberating about the scourge of the killing of women, some by their partners, and sad notion of corrective rape and killing of lesbians, as well as people with albinism. A special noontime devotion was conducted on this pain, led by Father Michael Lapsley, Director of the Centre for Healing Memories, together with Major Holmes of the Salvation Army. Some names of the recently murdered were read out symbolically for all those who have perished in this way. Special prayers for Lesotho and Israel Palestine we are also said.

The Conference resolved that churches must take up the struggle against gender based violence in earnest. Including addressing the sinfulness in this regard through the language, culture and practices in churches that may inspire and engender patriarchy and the reducing of the human dignity of women. "As the Church of Christ, we will pause to pray against the wanton killings of lesbians, people living with albinism and women. What is the current church rhetoric on these issues when God's heart bleeds?" said Bishop Siwa.

Conference had a number of commissions with resolutions for all the areas of the SACC campaign of The South Africa We Pray For – addressing poverty and inequality where the issues of education were dealt with as it is critical to fight inequality in the long terms. Conference dealt with the matters of the family life, economic transformation that includes the vexed land question, healing and reconciliation, and of course the challenge of anchoring democracy, where the governance issues belong. In this regard Conference follows the prophetic model of Prophet Jeremiah who, when the country was besieged and the economy in a serious junk status with land becoming of no value, bought land to generate hope and said: "For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." (Jeremiah 32:15)

Conference elected a new National Executive Committee, with the Praesidium made up of: President – Bishop Zipho Siwa, Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa; Senior Vice President – Rev. Frank Chikane, International President of the Apostolic Faith Mission; Second Vice President – Ms Nomasonto Magwaza of The Ecumenical Service for Socio Economic Transformation (ESSET), an affiliate organization of SACC.

This Triennial Conference was graced by the presence of the representative of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Archbishop Emeritus Anders Wejryd from Sweden, President of the WCC for Europe; the Africa President of the WCC, Prof Mary-Anne Plaatjies-Huffel; the President of the Botswana Council of Churches, Bishop Metlhayotlhe Beleme; the General Secretary of the Council of Churches of Lesotho, Mr Koosimile Emmanuel Makubekube; three former Presidents of the SACC, Bishop Peter Storey, Bishop Mvume Dandala, and Bishop Jo Seoka; two former Senior Vice Presidents, Mrs Thabisile Msezana and Rev Joy Faith Kronenberg; and a former veteran staff member, Rev. Abraham Maja from Limpopo. Archbishop Emeritus Anders Wejryd encouraged the Conference in saying; "Your constitution governs. Your constitution was formed in a process involving many – so that it could serve and govern many. You as churches accept and hail the constitution. It reflects values which we together recognize as serving humanity and God's will with us, and through us."

The SACC is determined and inspired by Nehemiah, to rebuild the nation to be a fully functional and equitable democracy. The SACC is committed to realize the pastoral mandate with God's help; to pray and work for the restoration (1 Pet 5:10 -11) of the violated social structures and address the mismanagement of the nation's resources. Thus in this context the church should restore hope in a hopeless and broken society.

ENDS.

[1] The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church can be found at: wcrch.ch/jddj.

[2] The World Methodist Council statement of association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification can be found at: wcrch.ch/jddj.

[3] Resolution 16.17 by the Anglican Consultative Council on its meeting 8-19 April 2016 in Lusaka can be found at: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/234449/acc-16-resolutions-2016.pdf>.

[4] JDDJ, §5.

[5] JDDJ, §14.

[6] Statement of Association, §19.