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TO ALL IN THE UPCSA

REMEMBERING AND HONOURING THE SON OF THE SOIL - THE LATE REV PROF DR VUYANI S VELLE: A TRUE PRESBYTERIAN, A MINISTER IN GOOD STANDING

The UPCSA remembers and honours the Rev Prof Dr Vuyani Vellem who was an outstanding Black Liberation Theologian of (BLT), who was approaching the zenith of his career when he died just before he turned 51 years old in December 2019. In his words, he was "a pastor, manager, ecclesiastical bureaucrat, researcher and teacher" (Vellem 2017:1).

Vuyani Vellem studied at the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM) where he had his first encounter with Black Theology of Liberation under Dr Cecil Ngcokovane (Vellem 2012:268). He furthered studies at the University of Fort Hare, where he worked with Dr Gideon Khabela and obtained BTh (Hons). Vellem moved to the University of Cape Town where he completed the MSocSc degree. He obtained his PHD at the University of Pretoria, Department of Dogmatics and Ethics.

On completion of ministerial training, Vuyani Vellem served as a probationer at Donhill (then Transvaal Presbytery and now Limpopo Presbytery) where he was ordained and later served as a minister of word and sacraments (1992–1994). He took a break from the congregational ministry while studying at Fort Hare. Thereafter, he was transferred to the Presbytery of the Western Cape (RPCSA 1997:86) where he took the charge of GG Ndzotyana Congregation in Khayamandi, Stellenbosch from 1998 to 2002 (RPCSA 1999:12). His manse at this stage was a shack, which the he was proud of and comfortable with. For Vellem, his *mkhukhu* enacted the internal logic (Vellem 2014b) of African history, the agency of black Africans, the originality and moral consciousness (Vellem 2014:3). It was a source of liberating resources for life and consciousness in an existential sense (Vellem 2014:5). He was content with the situation he found himself in at this time in his ministry (Vellem 201b:2–3, 2017:1), a dwelling place just like the homes of his members. He accepted the call from Newcastle Congregation in uThukela Presbytery (Vellem 2020:1) where he served between 2002 and 2004. His last appointment in a congregation was in Diepkloof, where he served for a short time before his untimely departure.