

DECISIONS AFFECTING ALL PRESBYTERIES – 2021

1. The General Assembly instructs the Presbyteries and Fellowships to
 - a. give attention to planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting in line with the strategic plan of the UPCSAs; and
 - b. submit their plans to the office of the General Secretary by the *end of February 2022*.
2. The General Assembly encourages Presbyteries to pursue the means of building cohesion and stability in the UPCSAs.
3. The General Assembly
 - a. adopts the report on patriarchy and unequal gender relations in the UPCSAs;
 - b. concedes the urgent need for equal representation in all church councils;
 - c. Instructs the ABC to work with the Gender Desk before the General Assembly/Executive Commission in ensuring equal representation; and
 - d. instructs the Clerk of Assembly to send the report down to congregations for information and action.
4. The General Assembly:
 - a. publicly confesses that the practice of patriarchy which promotes unequal relations based on dominance and submission is wrong;
 - b. publicly commits to re-interpret biblical, cultural, and societal gender relations based on reciprocity and mutual partnership.
 - c. Appoints a team of 3 people to draft a statement which should be read before the end of the Assembly; and
 - d. Instructs the General Secretary to communicate the statement widely.
5. The General Assembly encourages the Women's Consultation and its Resource Team, in liaison with the Gender Desk and Youth Desk, to continue monitoring leadership in the UPCSAs to keep track of progress in establishing a more representative missional leadership and building reciprocal gender relations in mutual partnership.
6. The General Assembly
 - a. instructs the Clerk of Assembly to circulate the questionnaire on women's experiences of ministry to all our presbyteries by 15th October 2021 for distribution to the congregations within their boundaries; and
 - b. sets a date of 15 May 2022 for responses to reach the Women's Consultation and its Resource Team.
7. The General Assembly
 - a. notes the development of a resource for Bible study by women in the church on women of the Bible; and
 - b. instructs all presbyteries and congregations to avail themselves of this resource in its draft form and to promote its use by their women, providing feedback for improvements to the Women's Consultation and its Resource Team.
8. The General Assembly
 - a. encourages the Women's Consultation and its Resource Team, in consultation with the Gender Desk, to complete the Bible study resource for use in small groups comprising both men and women by February 2022; and
 - b. encourages men to study the role of women in the Bible and to share what they learnt from this experience.
9. The General Assembly encourages the Women's Consultation and its Resource Team, in conjunction with the Gender Desk
 - a. to complete the resource on missional leadership strategies to equip and empower women and men in church leadership; and
 - b. to make this available to women by end of October 2021.
10. The General Assembly instructs all councils in the church to read this report and develop a system to achieve equal representation in church leadership, reciprocity, and mutual partnership with immediate effect.
11. The General Assembly agrees to amend the ministerial call/appointment processes, such that Presbyteries review each advertisement, for calling or appointing congregations, before it is posted to make sure that the wording is inclusive and does not prejudice any one group of people.
12. The General Assembly

- a. recommends that the Presbyteries ensure that the nominations of the AARP members are done on a 50/50 basis, male and female; and
 - b. mandates Clerk of Assembly to send the nominations back to the respective Presbyteries, if they do not comply with the requirement.
13. The General Assembly encourages all councils and fellowships to create spaces that allow the perpetrators of gender-based violence in the structures of the church (local church, Presbytery and GA) to confess and the victims to speak out, so that there could be healing and reconciliation.
14. The General Assembly, concerned about the unabated non-compliance and other pointers of poor performance by many Presbyteries, instructs the Manual Committee to:
 - a. develop a section that deals with a Presbytery in an unsatisfactory state, holistically;
 - b. report on the developed section at the 2022 Executive Commission; and
 - c. mandates the 2022 Executive Committee to deal with the report of Manual Committee accordingly.
15. The General Assembly instructs Presbyteries to declare as "being in an unsatisfactory state" (on the grounds of failing to comply with the Manual of Faith & Order) all congregations who, by 31 March 2022, have failed to:
 - (a) provide satisfactory reasons for their failure to pay their assessments and/or
 - (b) provide the Presbytery with a copy of the relevant title deed (where the property is registered in the name of the local municipality); and alternatively
 - (c) (where the property is registered in the name of the congregation) provide the Presbytery with a certified copy of the title deed, together with a letter stating they will not sell their property without the consent of both the Presbytery and the General Assembly Finance Committee.
16. The General Assembly instructs all Presbyteries to report due diligence in terms of proposal 5 to the 2022 Executive Commission, failing which the new provisions of the Manual, coming into being in terms of proposal 4, will be applied.
17. The General Assembly:
 - a. notes that the amount of approximately R 6.2 million was paid from the General Assembly to the UPCSA South African Pension Fund, to bring arrear contributions, late payment penalties and interest up to date; and
 - b. Instructs the Finance Committee to recover the outstanding contributions from the Congregations through Presbyteries so that all outstanding monies are received by 30 September 2021 and further instructs congregations to sign an acknowledgement of debt together with a payment plan of how the arrears will be settled and submit the plan to Finance Committee by 31 December 2021.
18. The General Assembly resolves that Presbyteries should institute a centralised payroll system to process all minister's emoluments and tax related matters in each Presbytery from 01 March 2022; each Presbytery only to proceed with the process once it is approved by the Finance Committee.
19. The General Assembly reminds all congregations of their obligation to pay assessments.
20. The General Assembly instructs each committee of the General Assembly and each Presbytery to construct a risk matrix and send it to the General Secretary for inclusion in the overall risk matrix of the UPCSA. This must then be discussed in each sub-committee meeting, and at least annually in the February Presbytery Administration meeting.
21. The General Assembly resolves to hold future meetings of the Executive Commission virtually.

22. General Assembly instructs Presbytery Clerks to circulate the questionnaire for seconded ministers and ensure its completion and return to Rev Dr Pat Baxter, Ministry Secretary, by 1 November 2021.
23. The General Assembly notes the potential for Presbyteries to misuse the concession regarding dispensation of sacraments by lay preachers and instructs Presbyteries to conduct an audit on the utilization of the dispensation of Sacraments by lay preachers and report to the Ministry Committee by 31 December 2021 for the Ministry Committee to report in the 2022 Executive Commission.
24. The General Assembly
 - a. commends the ministers, congregations and structures that play a prominent role in promoting local ecumenism;
 - b. encourages all the structures in the denomination to engage in the ventures to promote ecumenism at local, regional, and provincial levels and
 - c. encourages congregations to submit reports quarterly to the Presbytery Ecumenical Relationships Committee on their involvement in their locality; Presbyteries to submit reports to the General Assembly Ecumenical Relationships Committee.
25. The General Assembly urges congregations, Presbyteries and Fellowships to invite the Bible Societies to services, meetings, and various activities to address them about the work they are doing.
26. The General Assembly encourages Denominational, Presbytery and Congregational leadership to provide conveners with data to participate in virtual meetings/consultations.
27. The General Assembly commends ministers and elders on the way they have adapted their ministries, in order to continue to serve the church during these difficult times and commends their creativity and ingenuity in the way they have prepared and delivered the Word of God.
27. The General Assembly encourages the Presbyteries to work on translating the new orders of services but especially the vows for elders, probationers, and ministers.
28. The General Assembly instructs the Presbyteries to send their comments on the Statement on Inter-faith Dialogue, Co-operation, and Worship to the Worship Committee by 28 February 2022.
29. Assembly urges Presbyteries to familiarise themselves with the new designations of congregations (in Appendix 2).
30. Assembly urges Presbyteries to maintain continuity (minimum two consecutive terms) in the appointment of Mission and Discipleship Conveners in order to maximise the value of the training the committee gives to conveners. Presbyteries to ensure a succession policy.
31. Assembly adopts the recommended Minimum Stipends, Pulpit Supply and Travel Allowances for 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2022 as shown in the table below.

Minimum Stipend as of 1 Jan 2022

Years of Experience	Zambia	Zimbabwe	RSA
0-5	4580	104	9700
6-15	5000	112	10480
16-25	5341	121	11300
26-35	5770	131	12200
35+	6230	141	13200

Travel: (Zam) 400 (Zim) 50 (RSA) 7300
 Pulpit fee: (Zam) 350 (Zim) 15 (RSA) 500

32. Assembly notes that the focus of the Mission and Discipleship Committee for the next ten years will be "Going for Growth: Sowing, Growing, Reaping" and notes the initiatives planned to roll out this vision.
33. The General Assembly instructs Presbyteries & congregations to prioritise the ministry for the marginalised and vulnerable.
34. The General Assembly instructs Presbytery officials to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the Manual of Faith and Order, the Strategic Plan and the Decisions of the General Assemblies and Executive Commissions.
35. The General Assembly notes the change of the name from Church Associations Committee to Church Fellowships Committee.
36. General Assembly encourages Presbyteries not yet actively involved in preparing new Elders for ordination to download or otherwise obtain the training material for the "Basic Eldership Course"
37. General Assembly encourages Presbyteries and Congregations to be on the lookout for the KIDS ALIVE website and to login to it and download the teaching materials available there.
38. The General Assembly urges Synods, Presbyteries, congregations, and Fellowships to designate Clerks/secretaries to liaise with the GA Communications Committee for stories to be publicised.
39. The General Assembly instructs Presbyteries, in the spirit of pastoral sensitivity, to request Ministers, who have issues and concerns against their fellows and the denomination, to raise such in relevant platforms, rather than on social media and in public space.
40. The General Assembly encourages the members of the UPCSA to use the available channels of communication effectively.
41. The General Assembly urges Presbyteries in South Africa to advise and encourage all Ministers and members within their bounds to familiarise themselves with the PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION ACT and to comply in liaison with their Presbytery Clerks.
42. The General Assembly
 - a. adopts the revised policy; and
 - b. encourages all the Councils, structures, and members of the UPCSA to familiarise themselves therewith and adhere to the tenets thereof.

PRESBYTERY OF eGOLI

43. The General Assembly notes that the Fourways United Church was partially resolved through the granting of the interdict and that the mediation process is being contemplated to settle the dispute.
44. The General Assembly, noting the disruption of the plan of the eGoli Presbytery to launch the new Fellowships on the 17th of May 2020 due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, instructs the Presbytery to do so before the 30th of August 2021 dependent on the lockdown or as soon as it is practically viable.

PETITION FROM EGOLI PRESBYTERY

The Assembly Business Convener requested the Rev Chris Judelsohn to address the council on behalf of Egoli Presbytery, suggesting a way forward regarding this petition.

The Rev Chris Judelsohn addressed the Council and made the following proposals:

Petition On same sex Unions

The General Assembly:

- 1) Recognises that the matter of civil unions in South Africa and the call for ministers to offer pastoral support to same sex couples by blessing civil unions is a contentious and emotive matter.
- 2) Recognises the need for further reflection, prayer, study, and consultation across all three countries of the UPCSA

- 3) Refers the petition from the eGoli Presbytery to the Doctrine and Church in Society Committees to work on a discussion paper for presentation at the Executive Commission in 2022 with the intention of referring it to Presbyteries and congregations for discussion and report back to the General Assembly of 2023.

PRESBYTERIES OF MTHATHA

The General Assembly notes that the Rainy Congregation matter is still being attended to by the Presbytery of Mthatha.

PRESBYTERIES OF THE WESTERN CAPE

The General Assembly notes that

- c. The matter of Tiyo Soga Memorial Congregation was settled in favour of the UPCSA by the Supreme Court of Appeal (Bloemfontein); and
 - d. The lawyers are still working with the Municipality of Cape Town to transfer and register the property to have the Tiyo Soga Memorial Congregation occupying and utilising the premises accordingly.
9. The General Assembly
- a. notes with appreciation that after the members of the "RPC" resolutely joined the UPCSA, the UPCSA Tiyo Soga Memorial Congregation gained access to the property, which they currently use for the conduct of their business;
 - b. gives thanks to God for the achievement; and
 - c. notes that the City of Cape Town Municipality is being engaged for the administrative part of the transfer of the property to the UPCSA.

OVERTURE 1 – PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN CAPE

"The Presbytery of the Western Cape overtures the General Assembly to amend the Manual of Faith and Order as follows:

- (i) amend paragraphs 16.81 and 16.87 by changing in each the words, '150 days', to '93 days.'"
- (ii) amend paragraph 16.86 to read as follows: 'On taking long leave a member may take accumulated and annual leave consecutively. The minimum permissible period of long leave is 42 days', accumulated leave plus 20 days' annual leave, taken consecutively. The congregation pays the normal stipend package for the full period of accumulated and annual leave taken.'
- (iii) amend paragraph 16.95 by changing the figure of '90 days.' in the first sentence to '123 days' and replacing the second and third sentences with the following: 'When Study Leave is granted all the days of accumulated leave due to the minister by the time he/she goes on Study Leave shall form part of that leave.'"

The General Assembly:

- a) Agrees to the Overture with the understanding that those who had accrued 150 days will still take their leave days.
- b) Refers the Overture to the Manual Committee for the necessary amendments to be done.

PRESBYTERY OF ZIMBABWE

A. The General Assembly

- a. notes that the dispute between the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and the Presbytery of Zimbabwe Education Trust was also resolved through a mediation process;
 - b. commends the parties who were involved and the mediators who steered the process to that appreciable outcome; and
 - c. impresses on all in the UPCSA to give chance to mediation before they rush to litigation.
- B. The General Assembly notes the work done by the General Treasurer, Zimbabwe Presbytery, the Principal Officer, Chairman, and the Trustees of the Presbyterian Ministers' Pension and Widows and Orphans Fund of Zimbabwe, in trying to make the fund compliant again.

- C. The General Assembly endorses the list of Employer-appointed Trustees for the Presbyterian Ministers' Pension and Widows and Orphans Fund of Zimbabwe, for a further term of office. The names being as follows: Mr William Gwata, and Mrs Juliet Harris.
- D. The General Assembly notes the payment of USD \$ 55,145 made to the Presbyterian Ministers' Pension and Widows and Orphans Fund of Zimbabwe for the actuarial valuation shortfall as of 30 June 2019.
- E. The General Assembly instructs its Employer Trustees, through the General Assembly Finance Committee, to express to the Presbyterian Ministers' Pension and Widows and Orphans Fund of Zimbabwe, it's intention that it cannot continue to support the Presbyterian Ministers' Pension and Widows and Orphans Fund of Zimbabwe in its current form as a Defined Benefit Fund, and that after consultation as a Trustee Board with its members, ~~that~~ it ~~is~~ be changed to a Define Contribution Fund, or alternatively that a new fund is constructed with new rules.

SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

The General Assembly instructs the Moderator, the Clerk and Treasurer of the Synod of Zambia to:

- a. supply a schedule of all Ministers belonging to the Zambia Pension Fund, together with a list of Ministers on NAPSA, with a status for each member showing if their contributions are up to date and paid in full, and to provide reasons for any discrepancies, by 31 October 2021; and
- b. if unable to comply, supply reasons by 31 October 2021 why these same instructions above, have not been executed for the past number of years, when requested to do so, thereby placing the denomination possibly at risk.

OVERTURE 2

SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

The Synod of Zambia gives notice of intention to propose to the June/July 2021 General Assembly that:

"The Venerable General Assembly agrees to constitute the Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a Presbytery of the UPCSA.

The General Assembly instructs the Ministry Committee to work on the plan for the training of the ministers in the DRC and present it to the 2022 Executive Commission.

OVERTURE 3

SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

The Synod of Zambia gives notice of intention to propose the following Overture to the June/July 2021 General Assembly that:

" The Venerable General Assembly agrees to change the tenure of office for the Synod Moderator of the Synod of Zambia from the current two years to four years."