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Edition



U.P.C.S.A

THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA

Presbyterian Link

Linking all Presbyterians



@upcsa1999



UPCSA



Benny Boshielo - Convener

NOTE FROM CONVENER OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Greetings from the Communications Committee.

We are pleased to release this edition of our Newsletter, Presbyterian Link. The last edition was released towards the General Assembly, which mainly focused on this ultimate decision-making structure of our Denomination. We are pleased that proceedings at the General Assembly went on smoothly without any hindrances, even for those who connected virtually. Thank you to the dedicated Central Office team under the leadership of our General Secretary and the Clerk of Assembly. Of course, every single person played an extremely critical and important role in this regard.

The Communications Committee Team also wish to take the opportunity to heartily congratulate and welcome our Moderator of the General Assembly, The Right Rev, Lydia Neshangwe as she embarks on this journey of leadership of our Denomination. Not only do we welcome this daughter of the UPCSA, but we are equally excited and motivated by the vision that she has outlined for UPCSA. Stronger together, not only expresses a message of unity, but most critically, a sense of common purpose for us all Presbyterians. We see and feel a new hope, a new determination and the instilling of a common drive towards the growth of our church.

In this edition, we will receive her message and further outline of this vision. We will also get a

reflection on the outcome of the General Assembly, just to have a hint of what happened. But since the edition comes out in the month of November, we will also have some reflection on reformation and what it means to us. Of course, since we are just coming from a season of Fellowships Conferences, Presbyterian Link will also have a hint on those. We will end this edition with book reviews by some of the researchers and writers within the UPCSA.

Different from the past, it will be noted that this edition does have plenty of pictures. This is because the team has decided to tell the UPCSA story in pictures going forward. We believe that this is the best and easier way to tell our story to be easily understood by all.

Happy reading, and please share this newsletter with others.



The Right, Rev Lydia Neshangwe – Moderator

"STRONGER TOGETHER – BECAUSE THAT'S THE ONLY WAY."

The Bible does not make a mistake when it gives us the metaphor of the church as a 'body.' We will be amazed at how much we can learn from this

carefully chosen metaphor. I invite you to internalize the following three truths about your body.

The first truth we know about the body is that it is *made up of cells* - many different cells. Cells with varying and even opposite functions - cells hard and soft. Cell after cell after cell, all joined together in dynamic ways to make up the body. We, as the body of Christ, are made up of a diversity of individuals each fulfilling a specific calling, function and God given purpose. One of the fears of individuals in the church is the fear of losing one's individuality or specialness. But each cell in the body does not lose its identity; each one fulfils its identity so that the result is that the body is "stronger together."

The second and thought-provoking truth is that *cells have to work together*. There is no other way because that's the only way they will function healthily for the good of the body. We as believers, have to work together for our own survival, and for the survival of the church. God instructs us to use the unity mode of operation so that we are effective, grow as a body, achieve much for the Lord, and become exemplary to the world. Even non-religious groups have recently taken on the mantra of "stronger together" and we Christians have the advantage that we have the recipe for how to be "stronger together."

The third but hard truth is that *if your cells stop working together, you die!* This goes against the unhealthy type of individualism that says I can do my own thing and mind my own business in the church. The fact is that like cells, we are interconnected, and each of us is currently being affected by the actions and decisions of other people, like church leaders, like politicians, like economists, like friends, like enemies, like fellow believers. We stand on the shoulders of people who heeded God's call to work together to fulfil God's mission, and others are waiting to stand on our shoulders.

This calls us as believers to adjust our perspective – from focusing on ourselves and focus on what God is doing through us in the body of Christ with unity as the mode of operation. So let's do this – as a body – and fulfil God's call upon our lives. I leave you with the inspired words below:

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For

we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body — whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many." (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

May God grant you the wisdom to know that we are "stronger together."



REV, DR LUNGILE MPETSHENI - General Secretary

**BUILDING VITAL AND REFORMING
CONGREGATIONS FOR WORSHIP, MINISTRY AND
DISCIPLESHIP**

The title of this article is derived from the mission of the UPCSA, which reads as follows:

We will proclaim our Triune God in Southern Africa through

- Bearing witness to the saving love of Jesus Christ;
- Building vital, reforming congregations for worship, ministry and discipleship; and
- Visibly proclaiming the Kingdom of God through unity, justice, peace and love.

The UPCSA recognises a congregation as the basic unit of the manifestation of the Church, the body of Christ. Caring, nurturing, feeding, and growing a Congregation is doing the same to the body of Christ and undertaking the assignments that were given by Jesus to

his disciple, Peter. The members of the UPCSAs find a space to grow and express their faith and mature spiritually in a congregation. For that reason, the UPCSAs committed itself to building vital, reforming congregations for worship, ministry and discipleship as a way of proclaiming our triune God. Those are missional congregations. The UPCSAs promotes a missional congregation in a missional church and defines the concepts as follows:

What is a Missional Church?

A Missional Church is a sent Church, which understands its primary work as witnessing to Christ and serving God in the world.

A Missional Church is shaped by God for the community into which God has placed it. It is focused on those who don't yet know Jesus and on working with God in bringing fullness of life (involving justice, healing, wholeness and reconciliation) to all the people of the world.

UPCSAs Definition of a Congregation

"A Congregation (or worshipping community) is a group of people who gather regularly to meet Christ in Word and Sacrament, practice mutual care and make disciples in our changing contexts. They do so while seeking to participate with God in the transformation of the world. As communities, they move toward sustainability in leadership and ministry."

We are sharing these definitions with an appeal that each Presbytery, Session, Fellowship at all the levels of the denomination should facilitate reflections for broader understanding thereof and undertaking by each of the structures to galvanise the members of the UPCSAs therearound.

The UPCSAs gave guidance regarding the ministries that should be rolled out in every Presbytery and congregation as an advance towards vital and reforming congregations,

namely: Ministers' Welfare and Development, People with Disabilities, Eco justice, Men, Women, Youth, and Children. At the General Assembly level, the following has taken place to ensure the rolling out of the ministries:

- The Ministry Committee and Presbyteries are expected to champion this ministry to ensure that ministers are taken care of and are developed.
- A Committee on People with Disabilities has been established and it has started working.
- A Task Team on Ecological/Environmental justice has been established under the auspices of the Church in Society Committee.
- Men and women's issues are taken care of by the Gender Desk
- The Youth issues are taken care of by the Youth Desk.
- The Children's Ministry is placed under the Education and Training Committee.

The Congregations are urged to give focus on the seven ministries, among other missional assignments. The ministries should be standing items in the agendas of every Council. It is expected that Presbyteries will exercise oversight to make sure that all our congregations are vital and reforming. A congregation must be a "one-stop-shop" wherein congregants receive care and support, capacitation, discipline to be able to contribute to the level best towards the growth of the congregation and other members. One of our congregations has a mantra: "One service with us will change your life forever". It is important to build such congregations so that, as congregants reach stages of maturity, they become the salt of the earth and the light of the world and work towards restoring the moral fibre of societies that our congregations exist and operate in.

Some of our congregations already embarked on this task of building themselves to be vital and reforming, while others have not yet started. We commend those that have started and encourage them to soldier on. We urge those that have not done it to get started and work towards being vital and reforming. Our members must look forward to attending a service in their congregation every Sunday, as they realise that if they miss one service, they miss a lot. We are stronger together.



Rev Vusi Mkhungo - Clerk of Assembly

THE 2023 GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS – A HISTORICAL MOMENTS

The General Assembly was held in Zimbabwe for the first time in the life of The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. The venues for the 2 worship services on Saturday and Sunday were packed and many people could not fit in the venues. We give thanks to the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and the Local Organising Committee for making this historic General Assembly a success and memorable. It marked the induction of the first black woman to be the Moderator of the UPCSA. We are blessed by our Moderator the Rt Rev, Lydia Neshangwe. May God grant her wisdom and ability as she leads the denomination and represents the UPCSA in the across the universe.

One of the highlights of the General Assembly 2023 was the appointment of the first-ever GA Standing Commission. The Assembly Standing Commission has been tasked to carry out its duties in the period between meetings of the General Assembly in terms of its Terms of Reference, but is subject to the following provisos:

- (a) it has no inherent authority or jurisdiction, and in particular, it does not have the powers of the General Assembly to deal with or dispose of matters otherwise than is directed in the Manual.
- (b) it is bound by any restrictions or conditions that the General Assembly imposes from time to time.
- (c) it does not rescind decisions of the General Assembly.

The Assembly Standing Commission reports to the General Assembly, ordinarily through the Commission's Minutes, on the business it has handled and the decisions it has taken.

Another highlight was the record attendance of ecumenical partners who attended the 2 worship services. They came from all over the world including Singapore, the USA, the UK, Malawi, and Scotland. All the Commissioners from the 20 Presbyteries joined the meeting virtually on Zoom, only the ex-officio members and the administration staff members and conveners of Nominations and the Chaplains of the Moderators were in a central venue. We give glory to God for the successful business of the General Assembly which was concluded on Thursday the 30th of June 2023.





REV, DR WONKE BUQA

THE REFORMED THEOLOGY AND EVANGELISM

Generally, Reformed theology holds to the authority of Scripture [*igunya lesiBhalo*], the sovereignty of God [*borena ba Molimo*], salvation by grace through Christ [*usindiso ngobabalo ngoKristu*], and the necessity of evangelism [*tlhokeho ya boevangedi*]. It is sometimes called Covenant theology because of its emphasis on the covenant God made with Adam and the new covenant which came through Jesus Christ ([Luke 22:20](#)), in the same way, after the supper Jesus took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" [*umnqophiso omtsha ngenxa kaKrestu*]. The legacy of the Reformation addresses practical and relevant issues for 21st-century believers [*badumedi*], scholars and churches. One cannot speak of reformation and ignore the significance of Practical Theology [*ingqiqobuThixo efikelela ebantwini*] in addressing the issues of today's Church and society. In this regard, practical theology responds to the contextual needs of the church and society, it takes human experiences seriously (Ward 2017:5). The driving forces behind the Reformation of the 16th century and its relevance in today's missions, the sola Scriptura principle of the Reformation and provision of the critical perspective of Theology in today's world. We hold in high esteem the Fathers of the Reformation, their work and

writings such as John Calvin, John Knox, Ulrich Zwingli and Martin Luther. The two aforementioned sentences draw the author as primarily trained in Practical Theology to reflect on the origin and purpose of Reformation in aligning with the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) as one of the Reformed Churches. Perhaps, we may reflect and contemplate on the following four questions that prompted the Reformers and ask ourselves whether are we living this legacy of Reformers or not: *How much do we value the authority of the scripture? Why is God's sovereignty important? What does salvation by grace through faith alone mean? Why is it necessary to evangelise?*

How much do we value the authority of the holy scriptures?

The authority of Scripture means every word and stroke of the Bible possesses the authority of God and the right to rule the hearts, minds, and bodies of every inhabitant of the earth. The UPCSA accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as inspired by the Holy Spirit to be the uniquely authoritative witness to Jesus Christ and in that sense the Word of God and the final rule of faith and life (Chap 2 pg1). Scripture is *God-breathed* [*siphefumlelwe nguThixo*] ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)), which means Scripture is God-speaking and thus has the final say in all matters, whether we choose to submit to it or not. We tend to value or read the Manual of Faith and Order and other works of literature above the Holy Scriptures. Above that we should study the scriptures.

Why is God's sovereignty important?

The UPCSA makes it clear that because the Church knows that ultimate sovereignty and glory belong to God alone as ruler over all, it must bear witness to the limits of the Government's rights and authority (Chap 2 Pg. 29). The Bible teaches that God is sovereign – even going so far as to say that all authority is appointed by Him: "For there is no authority except God, and those which exist are established by God" (Romans 13:1). It becomes sad when the Churches are reluctant to speak truth to the rulers and governments of this world. The social ills, economic powers and what the late Rev Prof Vuyani Vellem describes as the *Theology of the stomach* seem to limit the voice of the Church (Buqa 2015:4).

What does salvation by grace through faith alone mean?

What happened to the proclamation of the Salvation through Christ alone in the Reformed Traditional Churches? In a conversation with Prof Zolile Rubben Rashe (2 November 2023) at the funeral of the late Rev Mlamli Agrippa Mhaga, he argued that the proclamation of salvation through Christ alone came from the Reformers in protest against the Roman Catholic traditional teachings. He further argued why Salvation [*doctrine of soteriology*] appears to some of our members as if it is the Charismatic teaching. In ordination services, all ministers would take vows that, “As far as I know my own heart, I am moved to enter this ministry by zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, the call of the Holy Spirit, the commission to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom on earth and a desire for the salvation of all people” (Chap 2 Pg.37).

Why is it necessary to evangelise?

The term “Evangelism” is derived from the Greek word “*euangelion*”. It means “*gospel*” or “*good news*”. Evangelism is the act of spreading the gospel with the purpose of sharing the message of Jesus Christ. This term is so common in the UPCS and Fellowship of Men was born from this conception and evangelism is the engine of the growth of the Church through witnessing and proclamation of the Salvation of Christ. It becomes pathetic that the Fellowship of Men seem to be neglecting this purpose of God [*icebo likaThixo*] gradually. I often have conversations on evangelism with a couple of preachers in the UPCS, most of them seem to take evangelism as an opportunity for funerals and I argue that a funeral is a comfortable space that is not going out to people. Evangelism should evolve. “Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit....” It was the last command that Jesus gave us in Matthew (28:18-20). This command is called as “Great Commission”, also known as [Evangelism](#).

Overview of the UPCS Fellowships Conferences

The months of July – September are a season of Church Fellowships Conferences within the UPCS. In this period, the Fellowships bring together hundreds of their members to come and review the work they have done for the past twelve months and similarly develops new programs and plans for the ensuing year. These conferences usually end with vibrant revival services. In this edition of Presbyterian Link, we review some of the conferences.

Fellowship of Men



The Conference of the Fellowship of Men took place on the 07th – 10th September 2023 at the Petrus Molema Stadium, Mangaung, within the precincts of the Presbytery of Trans-Xhariep. The Conference was attended by 250 delegates from 14 Presbyteries plus 90 guests and observers. The conference was held under the theme ‘... We are crafted into the potter’s perfect plan for a Mission ...’ (Jeremiah 18:1 – 10)

The defining moment of the Conference was that ‘apart from being forerunners in uniting the Fellowships, the Conference was hugely vocal in its bid to make sure that delegates engage in all sorts of projects to distinctly show life and work done at congregational level and society around which they are residing, that they should go to the nations and practically evangelize for the Glory of the Lord’.

(Source, Bro Nathi Ndlovu – General Secretary)



Fellowship of Women



The Conference of the Fellowship of Women took place on the 03rd – 06th August 2023 at the Coastland Hotel within the bounds of the Presbytery of eThekweni. A total of 504 delegates attended the Conference, under the theme ‘... Re-purposing the Fellowship of Women in line with the vision and mission of the UPCSA ...’ (Theme text: Isaiah 43:19)

Conference emerged with five key outcomes.

- i. A new vision for the Fellowship of Women – A spirit filled transcendental and inspired Fellowship.
- ii. Adoption of a 5-year strategic plan with the following key focus areas.
 - a. Organizational effectiveness.
 - b. Spirit and numerical growth.
 - c. Financial sustainability.
 - d. Social imperatives.
 - e. Strategic partnerships.
- iii. Prioritizing the discussion and ensuing programmes on Gender-Based violence as a key social imperative which will become the flagship programme for the current EXCO.
- iv. Fixing your sister’s crown without letting anyone know about – encouraging respect and dignity of each other, promoting unity of the Fellowship on an ongoing basis.

FOW Outreach – AGM outreach project which donated goods to a home for the aged. Donations included a fridge, kettles, urns and food stuffs.

(Source: Str. Buhle Moyo, General Secretary)



Fellowship of Youth

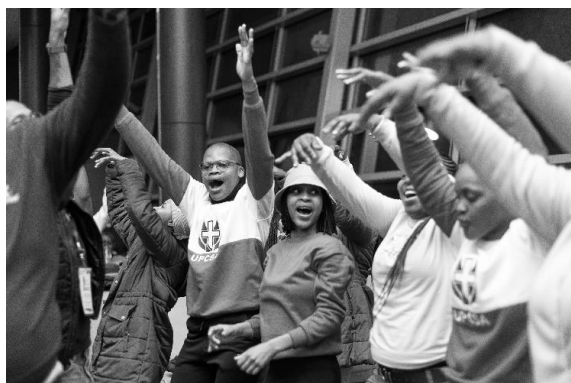
The 3rd Annual Fellowship of Youth Convocation was held in Polokwane, at the Peter Mokaba Sports Complex, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Limpopo on the 6th – 9th of July 2023. Attended by hundreds of young people from across the length and breadth of the Denomination, the Convocation was held under the theme “... As deer pants for the streams of water, so we long for you ...”. The theme set the tone for the conference, emphasizing the spiritual thirst and longing for a deeper connection with the divine.

The Convocation was a spirit-filled experience that resonated profoundly with the youth. Acknowledging the role of the church of today, the young people actively addressed issues within the Fellowship and initiated conversations on broader matters impacting the youth, both within and outside the church.

The Fellowship of Youth Convocation was testament to the vibrancy and relevance of the Youth within the church. It served as a platform for spiritual growth, open dialogue and community building, leaving a lasting impact on all who participated. As the Fellowship continues to evolve, these gatherings will

play a crucial role in shaping the future of the church and its youth.

(Source, Gabriel Mampane- FoY President)



Fellowship of Men working together with other Men's Fellowships in the African continent

Since its association and affiliation to the Pan African Presbyterian Men Fellowships, the Fellowship of Men has been attending conferences of other Fellowships in the African continent. The Pan African Presbyterian Men Fellowships is a Forum of Presbyterian Men in Africa which was launched in 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya. Both the then Moderator of General Assembly, Rev Mukondi Ramulondi and the General Secretary, Rev, Dr Lungile Mpetseni attended the launch. The next conference in 2018, was held in Benoni, South Africa. The third conference was held in Ho, Ghana in July this year and the Fellowship of Men, President and General Secretary, Rev Nkululeko Nojoko and Bro Nathi Ndlovu attended, accompanied by Bro Benny Boshielo and Bro Joseas Chokoe from Limpopo. The conference was held under the theme ***"African Presbyterian Men In Action Against Climate Change"***.

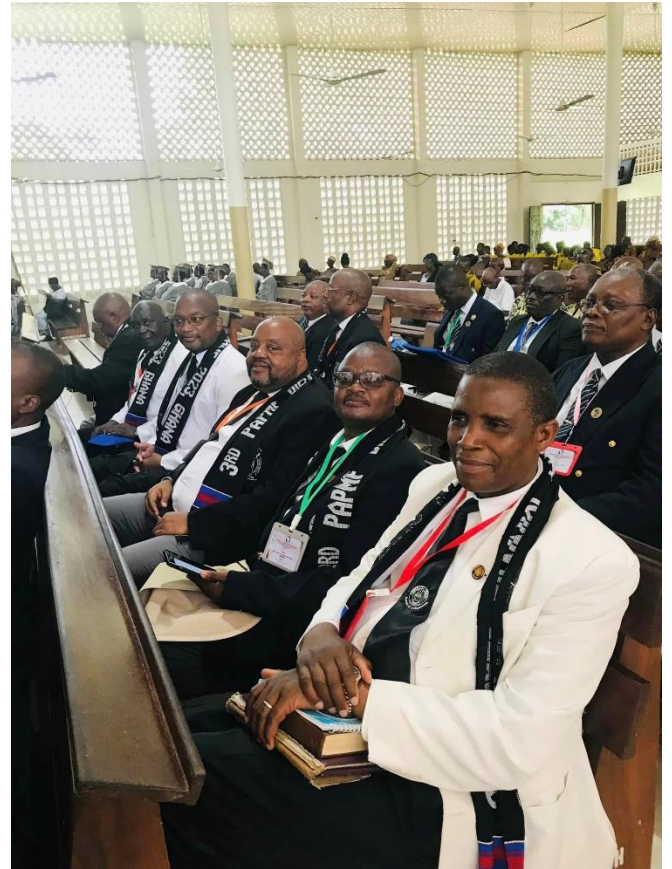
Prior to that, the FoM also attended the Men's Conference of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa in Mombasa, Kenya, which was held under the theme ***"...let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works"***. (Hebrews 10:24). While in Kenya, the team also had an opportunity to visit the offices of the All-Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi, where a meeting was held with the Office of the General Secretary to explore areas of cooperation.

The FoM also attended another Men's Conference of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, (CCAP), Synod of Livingstonia in Lilongwe, Malawi, which was held under the theme ***'...Man that pleases God'***. ***(Dodana lakukondweska/Mzibambo wokondweretsa Mulungu -Exodus 33:12 – 13, Job 1:8, Hebrews 11: 5 – 6)***. Though the FoM could not attend, a message was sent to a conference of the Men's Fellowship in Maputo, Mozambique, which was also held under the theme:

***'...God-Fearing Men, Have Been on This Mountain for 30 Years, So Get Out of Here'.
You Have Been On This Mountain Long Enough. It's Time To Break Camp And Move On ...'.***
(Deuteronomy 1:6 - 7)

The Fellowship of Men is pleased to associate with other Presbyterian men in the African continent in our endeavor to spread the Gospel in every corner of continent. It is hoped that this Presbyterian movement of men will continue to grow, and as reflected in its constitution, also embrace other fellowships in denominations from the reformed traditions.

The Presbyterian Link team congratulate the Fellowship of Men on this continental work and wish them well in their endeavors.





LEFT: REV. TATI, RIGHT: REV. MOLIFI

"Ministry for me means carrying the Cross and following our Master. If the foundation is not Christ, one cannot manage. Ministry means denying self for Christ to live and reign in you."

The streets of Lenyenye experienced a wave of jubilation as the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in the Limpopo Presbytery inducted Rev. Ntobya Mary-Anne Molifi as a Called Minister of Weirsdale Congregation. The ordination was swamped by members from the Presbytery of Limpopo and their ministers from different congregations. Songs of praise were warming the atmosphere as the people of God were praising God. "Rea ho boka Morena, re ntse re thabela wena..." was one of the hymns in the atmosphere. The joy and overwhelming sensation on

our celebrant was evident as she made her way to the podium along with the Presbytery Moderator of the day

Rev. Awedzani Nemaughwe. Her mentor Reverend Tati appeared to witness the call being fortified.



The congregants of the Presbytery of Limpopo

We had a short chat with the celebrant, and this is what she had to say about her call, "I feel Blessed, honored and favored by God. It was a journey for me, Session, Stewards, and the entire Congregation,

including my family, to be where we are as a congregation. Weirsdale was an Appointing Congregation, but through

hard work, it gained the status of a Calling Congregation. It was the best day of my life. Especially looking at the journey I went through from being a Probationer to being an Ordained Minister and to

Reverend Molifi is the new kid on the block as she is fresh off the shores of being a graduate at the University of Pretoria, having served her first-ever call in her home Presbytery. She is married to a Presbyterian who hails from the



being Called by the Congregation, which has experienced many challenges. No, it was honestly not. Weirdale between me and them was Love at first sight. The Love, Support, and Care are the very same things I have received since the 2nd of August 2018 when I first came to this Congregation. It is God who calls and Ordains us. In Ministry, we need to respond like Samuel in the Old Testament and say "Speak, Lord; I am listening." Ministry for me means Caring the Cross and following Our Master. If the foundation is not Christ, one cannot manage. Ministry means denying yourself for Christ to live and reign in you".

In the spirit of true Presbyterianism, we get to see the practicality of serving the Lord with due diligence and a triumphant journey. In this story, we get to learn that the Congregation had its fair share of challenges as they were an Appointing Congregation. However, just like David, they prevailed and overcame giants to be dubbed a Calling Congregation.

Tshwane Presbytery. We also get to see

how God directs us, and we follow. They are blessed with beautiful daughters whom they reside with. Reverend Molifi also happens to be the Moderator of the Presbytery of Limpopo.

It is truly an honor to see Young people making moves for the Lord, and this could be a lesson to all of us that a response to a call is all we need to be in alignment with God's will for our lives. Love, peace, and happiness are the order of the day.

By
Str Sekodi Maja





Rev Richard Mkandawire

Title: The Benefits of Prayer: Cultivating a Deeper Relationship with God and Overcoming Temptations

Prayer is a profound and powerful practice that connects us with the divine and offers us a multitude of blessings. In Matthew 6:6-7, Jesus provides valuable insights into the nature of prayer:

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words."

Jesus Christ emphasizes that there are REWARDS of prayer.

1. **Cultivating a Deeper Relationship with God (Matthew 6:33):** Prayer is a key to maintaining a vibrant and ever-growing relationship with our Heavenly Father. As we seek Him in private, away from distractions, we open the door to a deeper intimacy with God. The priority of our lives should be to seek His kingdom, and through prayer, we align our hearts and desires with His divine purpose.
2. **Overcoming Temptations and Trials (Matthew 26:41-42):** In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus exhorted His disciples to "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Through prayer, we find the

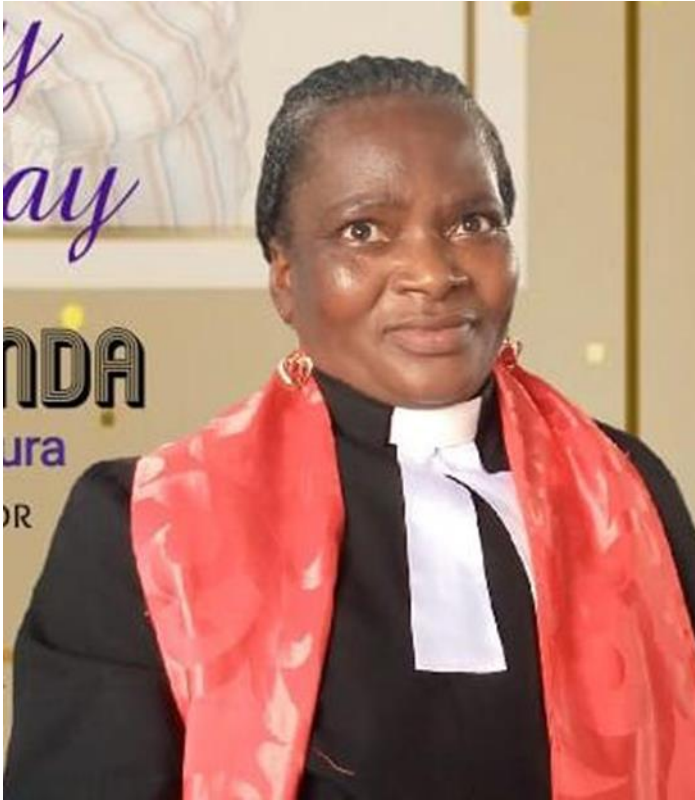
strength to overcome temptations and trials in our lives. The Lord's Prayer reminds us to petition, "Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil," emphasizing that prayer preempts and delivers us from these challenges (Matthew 6:13).

3. **Restoring Your God-Given Identity and Authority (Luke 15:11-32):** The parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 exemplifies the Father's love and ecstatic, outgoing love toward His children. When the prodigal son returned, he found not only forgiveness but also restoration of his identity and authority within the family. Prayer helps us reclaim our God-given identity and authority over the evil one.
4. **Receiving Blessings and Rewards of Prayer (Matthew 17:20-21):** Some blessings are only unlocked through the power of prayer. In Matthew 17:20-21, Jesus teaches that faith, coupled with prayer, can move mountains. It is through persistent, fervent prayer that we witness God's extraordinary works in our lives, receiving rewards and blessings that are uniquely tied to our communion with Him.
5. **Finding Refuge and Deliverance (Psalm 91:1; Psalm 34:19):** Prayer is our sanctuary and source of deliverance. Psalm 91:1 declares, "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." When we face trials and temptations, Psalm 34:19 reassures us that "The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all."
6. **Receiving Our Inheritance:** In Galatians 4:6-7, the apostle Paul reinforces the idea that, through prayer, we can call God our Father and receive the inheritance as His children. It is through our intimate communion with Him that we experience His love, strength, and guidance.

Conclusion

Prayer is a potent tool that not only deepens our relationship with God but also empowers us to overcome temptations and trials, restores our identity and authority, and opens the door to unique blessings and rewards. As we heed the words of Jesus and seek the secret place of communion with our

Heavenly Father, we tap into the transformative benefits of prayer that sustain and enrich our spiritual journey



Rev Annah Banda

Lord we thank you for the land of Palestine and its People. We thank for your presence even at this critical time of wars, conflicts and injustices because we are assured of your presence always.

We pray that you clothe your people in Palestine with peace that surpasses all understanding. May your peace all the fiery darts of offensive hurled by the devil with aim of destroying your people.

We pray that you grant your people peace completeness to your children for Jesus Christ that is what you came for. Help your people oh God that we experience that fullness without wars and injustices. We pray for salvation of every individual, political and spiritual salvation of the nation of Palestine.

May your Spirit gives Palestine soft answers which turn away wrath, where they have been wounded we ask for the balm of Gilead to soothe and heal Palestine knowingly that Peace is the presence of God and not the absence of conflicts. Therefore, help together through our Lord Christ who brings peace, preaches peace and is peace himself that Palestine and its people may experience peace even in the midst of conflicts, wars and injustices. In Jesus mighty name we pray. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE

Brethren in Christ I greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ Amen.

Today we are reflecting and praying for people of Palestine and peace in this God given state. During this time of wars and injustices our primary weapon against all is prayer. When we truly believe that prayer makes a difference we become the voice of the voiceless and the power of the powerless.

Today we connect with the God of heaven as we intercede for the people of Palestine and peace in Palestine.

Peace is defined as to live without wars or troubling thoughts. Theologically it's simple "completeness" as Jesus's mission "I came that they may life in its fullest"(John 10:10)

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit Amen.



TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SOCIETY

A HOMILETICAL
PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE



Robert Munthali

BOOK REVIEW

Transformation and Development of Human Society A Homiletical Pastoral Perspective

Rev, Dr Robert Munthali

(Doctoral research book)

Although published almost ten years ago, in 2014, this well researched piece of work by Rev, Dr Robert Munthali, done with the University of Pretoria continues to pose very serious challenges on the important aspect of development and the role of the preacher in this regard. A rather complicated and complex subject to explore, however Rev, Dr Munthali demystify this subject in his book.

Firstly, Munthali takes the reader through a brief overview of transformation and development through the ages. Then he goes on to unpack the concept of transformation, development and healing as understood by some of the well-known preachers, namely John Chrysostom, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Billy Graham and their contribution to the subject. Munthali then concludes by unpacking preaching as a factor for transformation, development and healing.

What is most impressive about the book is its ability to fuse the concept of transformation and development within the preaching space. This book makes an easy reading in that it utilizes real life examples in the area of Venda and exposes the reader to the role played by the local church denominations and traditional leaders.

The content and context of the book is ably captured in the following review.

“ In this book, the promovendus investigates the critical role a preacher and his/her homilies have in bringing transformation, development and healing in the human society. The investigation shows how a preacher has been sidelined on issues of progress, when from time immemorial he/she has been a critical and pivotal component in the phenomenon. The study is an attempt to reclaim a preacher’s role in bringing progress and healing in underdeveloped communities through homilies, particularly, in Venda, rural South Africa. This book proposes a preacher as the transformer, developer and healer of the people’.

This book is a must read by every Minister, preacher and development worker, within and outside the church, as it provides a context to the concept of transformation, healing and development in a manner that was never done before.

By

Elder Benny Boshelo
Stuartville Congregation
Limpopo

UPCSA

Cloud of Witnesses

A Channel of Timeless Values of the Christian Ministry

Vusi Mdlalose

Cloud of Witnesses

A Channel of Timeless Values of the Christian Ministry

Author : Rev Vusi Mdlalose

The Rev JV Mdlalose, the Author of this book, entitled “Cloud of witness: A channel of timeless values of the Christian Ministry, has in an impressive manner, certainly plucked up courage to put pen on paper on the sensitive and controversial issue of part-time Ministry, as it is referred to in the UPCSA. However, I am convinced that the Rev Mdlalose’s profoundly researched-based discussion of the subject of fulltime versus parttime ministry will set the readers thinking and ultimately succeed to get both the proponents and opponents of part-time Ministry to view the crucial issue of how ministry ought to be practiced in the same light.

Strictly speaking, the term ‘part-time ministry’ does not exist in the lexicon on ministerial formation and training. It only exists at the practical level of doing ministry and is not practiced by all Ministers of the UPCSA. The practice is certainly a product of socio-economic imbalances, inequalities and various related contexts to which the author refers in his book. It is therefore a special arrangement that is made in a particular context, and not general practice in the denomination. Hence at ordination, where ministerial candidates or probationers take their vows, no reference is made of it. Instead, the understanding, in terms of their vows, is that the candidate is ‘moved to enter this ministry (only) by zeal and for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, the call of the Holy Spirit ...’. The vows are silent about part-time ministry because the Church’s understanding is that the ministry is essentially a fulltime service’.

By



Rev Mautji E Pataki

William Mpamba Memorial Congregation

BOOK REVIEW

Cloud of Witnesses

A Channel of Timeless Values of the Christian Ministry

Author: Rev Vusi Mdlalose

Ministry is the most sacred for those called by God to serve and share His gospel. Ministry has evolved over time to accommodate the current societal dynamics. I recently read a very interesting book Cloud of Witness which talks about the journey of a minister who invested his time investigating life within ministry. What captured my eye is his comparison between full-time ministers and part-time ministers, role elders in the church and significance of the Manual of Faith and Order. As a young candidate in the ministry myself, I found myself question whether I am investing myself enough in God's work, will I ever withstand the test of time in ministry, do I even have the strength and capacity to fulfil of the role of servanthood fully.



The author detailed various aspects of ministry and how traditional ministry served God and His people. I view this book as a tool for the church to introspect and go back to the basics where ministers fully committed their lives to serving and proclaiming the true gospel which had more sustainability and impact. Rather than the status quo that is gaining momentum about part-time ministers which can be viewed as a de-service to God's work and His people; full-time ministry remains at the heart of God's work. Full-time ministry ensures that the leadership is present and available to provide pastoral care, fully active and involved with all operational matters of the church.

The book also highlighted the need for continuous training of the elders of the church in order to correctly perform their duties, avoid overstepping of boundaries with ministers and theologically understand what eldership entails. What I liked the most is how the book highlighted the importance of partnership between the minister and elders in executing the work of God and church. I view

this as an opportunity to build a solid leadership that will harmoniously and righteously lead God's flock.

The book further highlighted the importance of the Manual of Faith and Order which has been disregarded overtime. This has resulted into shortcomings that we see in our church conducts. I have personally witnessed these shorting comings when I visit different UPCS church congregations, there is high lack of uniformity within our church. By fully abiding to the rules set out in the Manual of Faith and Order will instil discipline, order and uniformity of the church. This is a vital book I see as a bi-law while the bible is the law.

The key takes out from the book is how it prepared me for the journey ahead and finding my identity within the ministry. Now I know how to be of service to undertake ministry as a calling rather than a job.

By: **Str Khustso Leburu**

Student Minister

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COMPILATION AND GRAPHICS

Bro. Solly Maluleka

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence and all articles should be directed to.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rev., Dr Lungile Mpetseni – General Secretary

EDITORIAL

Elder Benny Boshielo – Convener: Communications Committee

CORRESPONDENCE

Christine Kasambala – Coordinator

CORRESPONDING EMAIL

gensec@unitingpresbyterian.org