



MODERATOR'S PASTORAL LETTER ON THE CWECWE CASE

Dear friends in Christ,

The word of God says, "If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts share its suffering" (1 Cor 12:26). As the UPCS family we learnt with grief about the violation and abuse of a seven-year-old girl, Cwecwe. She and her mother are part of our UPCS family in a congregation in the Presbytery of East Griqualand.

This incident has not only evolved into a national issue in South Africa, but it has moved beyond the borders and become an issue drawing global concern. This is because it takes the whole village to raise a child. Now the child we are raising has been abused. The question is what are we to do as a people led by the Spirit of God, when such heinous acts take place? This case presents for us a critical moment for reflection and introspection around how we respond when such heinous acts happen within our churches and our communities.

I invite us as the body of Christ to offer a ministry of love and compassion to Cwecwe and her family.

I invite our Presbyteries to ensure that the relevant committees and fellowships reflect on this issue so that we may examine and imagine preventative measures for such evils acts upon children.

I invite us all to listen to our God of justice and exercise the necessary advocacy against such injustices and infringements that threaten the lives of our children.

I invite us to respond in ways that bring healing, recognizing that the damage that has been done goes beyond physical damage.

I invite us to practice the spiritual gift of self-control as we resist the spread of misinformation and unhelpful speculations that may increase harm in this situation.

I invite us to remain a people of 'action producing prayer' as we trust in a God who hears, sees and is concerned. Let's always remember that such heavy issues require wisdom and discernment.

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

Yours in Christ,
Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe
UPCSA Moderator of General Assembly