



URCSA NEWS • NUUS

Issue 2:2017

URCSA at the WCRC in Germany

From 27 June to 8 July 2017 a substantial delegation from URCSA attended the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in Leipzig, Germany. The Moderamen attended, as well as Dr Matlhodi Teu and Ms Khambule from the CWM, and also Pearl Lobize and Isabel Malimabe on behalf of the CYM.

The WCRC is the largest body of Reformed Churches in the world. It has 230 membership churches representing more than 80 million Christians. Every seven years they have a General Council meeting with more than 1 000 delegates and guests attending. The theme of this year's meeting was "Living God, renew and transform us".

Much was said at this meeting about the role of the church in doing justice. There was particular emphasis on gender justice and creation justice. We need women and the creation of God to be justly treated.

The URCSA delegation formed a very prominent part of this meeting. They participated in the discussions in such a way that they made us proud. They took on leadership roles, especially vis-à-vis Africa, during the meeting.



The URCSA delegation to the WCRC



Prof Mary-Ann Plaatjies van Huffel participating in the Liturgy during the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in Leipzig, Germany.

Reformation 500

This issue of URCSA NEWS is dedicated to the commemoration of the "starting point" of the Reformation 500 years ago. On 31 October 1517 Martin Luther placed his 95 theses on the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany, challenging the then views of people's relationship with God, which, Luther said, should be based on God's grace only and not on our efforts, nor on the power of the church.

The Reformation can be summed up in the five "Solus" which are:

- Sola Scriptura (by Scripture alone)
- Sola Gratia (by grace alone)
- Sola Fide (by faith alone)
- Solus Christus (Christ alone)
- Soli Deo Gloria (glory to God alone)



Invitation to all URCSA members

On 31 October 2017
At 17:00

In the MUSAION of the University of Pretoria.

A joint service will be held to commemorate Reformation 500 with participating churches: the United Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, the Reformed Church of Africa, and the Dutch Reformed Church in South-Africa. All members of URCSA are invited to attend this service which will last for about an hour, thereafter refreshments will be served.

Please come in great numbers and in your church uniform.

Editorial

I was so happy when they told me that this page belongs to the Editor of URCSA NEWS. It is such a privilege to be involved in the URCSA NEWS, and then to be given a full page to write about events that make me happy ... wow, that is a particularly huge joy in my life.

I have to apologise that you have to look at me twice on this page. I will see to it that it will not happen again!

On the first photo I am bringing greetings from URCSA to the Reformation 500 celebrations in Bern, Switzerland, on 18 June this year. The Federation of Protestant Churches in Switzerland organised this illustrious event with many guests who are of ecumenical importance, such as Prof Jerry Pillay who was the Chair of the WCRC. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury was there. With churches from all over the world represented there, it was

Prof Christina Landman

a special privilege for URCSA to be invited to address the meeting. A special word of thanks to Serge Fornerod, who is the director of this Federation, for inviting URCSA. Serge was previously involved in unification talks between the DRC and URCSA.

I also conducted interviews with two very special people who you will read about on this page. The one is Prof Jürgen Moltmann, a very well-known theologian from Germany, who visited South Africa in April. The other is our own Marydith who runs the office of the General Synod. What fun it was to talk to them both! I really learnt a lot from both of them.

URCSA NEWS makes our church visible. We would like to invite one and all to contribute news to our paper. Send contributions to christina.landman2@gmail.com. We are looking forward to what you have to share!



Prof Moltmann, why should we read your work in Africa?



Prof Moltmann with Prof Christina Landman

In April this year the famous Prof Jürgen Moltmann visited South Africa to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Pretoria.

For those of us who are not academics, Prof Moltmann is a German theologian who has written a few very famous books. One of these books is "The Crucified God". It was published in 1973, 44 years ago, and is today still prescribed to students. In this book Prof Moltmann explains his thoughts: when God became a human being, he entered into our suffering and our struggles.

I was fortunate to obtain the right to interview him for half an hour on April 4, 2017, in the Courtyard Hotel in Hatfield, Pretoria. Prof Moltmann is 91 years old, but speaks in a clear voice and with deep thoughts.

I asked him about his theology. Why should students in South Africa read his work? Why should they not say, we read only African scholars because these German theologians are colonialists?

I asked him: "Prof Moltmann, are you a liberation theologian or are you a coloniser?"

"My theology," Moltmann said, "is based on the Bible. And the Bible is not a German book; it is a book that originated in the Middle East. I have to read it for

the German context. I am not a liberation theologian, but I am a theologian of repentance. The Germans who had an Auschwitz had to learn to repent. I know my limitations as a German theologian. I cannot lead the way for Africans. Africans have different problems from that of the Germans. I have a great respect for the liberation theologians like Allan Boesak who liberated blacks and Gutierrez who liberated the Latin American peoples. For me, I am a German theologian who prays for forgiveness and new beginnings," Prof Moltmann said.

"And that thought," Prof Moltmann humbly said, "I can also extend to Africans. The cross of Christ binds us together.

"See the sunrise behind the cross," he said. "What is this sunrise behind the cross?" he then asked. "Africans must work that out for themselves: what makes the sun rise in these difficult times? How can we show the sunrise to each other and live the sunrise with and for each other when life is hard and people are poor?"

What a privilege it was to speak to such a great theologian: The Theologian of the Sunrise behind the Cross.

Marydith does it all

In the office of the General Synod in the Dienssentrum in Mamelodi ... there you will find Marydith Buys.

She does so many things that it is difficult to give her a job title. But it is something like "Admin Assistant for Finance, Logistics and Project Management".

Marydith has been born and bred in Eersterust, Pretoria. She worked for Eersterust congregation, formally known as URCSA Pretoria as an admin assistant from August 2008 to 2013. It was a half day job during the time when Rev Colin Goeiman was the minister of the Word there. At the same time she worked in the afternoons for the General Synod. On the first of July, 2013, she started working full time for the General Synod after headhunted by Dr Daniel Maluleke for the job.

What does Marydith do for a hobby in between working long hours for the Synod?

She does ballroom dancing! She was always the athletic type, but now she has converted her talents into something as beautiful as dancing.

A substantial part of her time goes into raising her three sons: Ashthan (15 years old and in Grade 9), Eaghan (8 years old and in Grade 3) and Eudor who is 4 years old.

Finally, she mentions people who were her mentors for the past ten years and with whom she has worked closely. With the exception of Dr Maluleke, she points out Dr Dawid Kuyler, the late Dr HG Platt, the late Dr Johan Botha, Prof Thias Kgatla, Prof Mary-Ann Plaatjies van Huffel, Prof Leepo Modise and Mr Tebogo Phatudi.



Marydith Buys in the General Synod's office

Moderamen meets United Evangelical Mission

On 6 September 2017 members of the Moderamen met with the leadership of the United Evangelical Mission in Kempton Park. This delightful meeting started with our two guests introducing themselves.

Rev Volker Martin Dally was ordained in Germany in 1989 and spent years ministering to believers in India and Indonesia. Since February 2016 he is the General Secretary of UEM, stationed in Wuppertal in Germany. He is married and has five children.

Rev John Wesley Kabango is from the Anglican Church of Rwanda. He too has a wife and five children. After obtaining a doctorate in Dublin, Ireland, in Development Studies he moved to Germany where he presently is in charge of the UEM projects in Africa.

The UEM focusses on projects that equip believers with skills in doing justice, practicing diakonia, and obtaining self-sustainability. The UEM offers a variety of scholarships that are advertised on their website.

The Moderator of URCSA, Prof Leepo Modise, presented our strategic plan to the representatives of UEM. He pointed to our need for (1) our own seminary, (2) our own office buildings and (3) a General Secretary.

The UEM is a group of 36 Protestant churches of which 13 are in Africa, 16 in Asia and 7 in Germany. Their logo is "The smile of the Gospel", a slogan they have patented!

URCSA has applied for full membership of UEM. And since we have established at this meeting that we have much in common, URCSA will move towards a formal partnership with the UEM to journey with them towards realising our goals. In future URCSA shall apply for funding from the UEM for our projects, and also recommend members – especially women and young people – to apply for scholarships financed by UEM.



URCSA meets with DRC

Becoming one

On 22 and 23 August, 2017, an historical event took place in Benoni, Johannesburg, when the moderatures of URCSA and the Dutch Reformed Church met. They were joined by the moderators of the regional synods of both churches. And they talked about ... unification.

Actually, they did not only talk about it, they took decisions that will actually start the process of unification ... from the congregations upwards.

Three decisions were taken to kick-start this process:

- Firstly, the regional moderators are to inform and support presbyteries and congregations to start with unification talks between local congregations of the URCSA and DRC.
- Secondly, the actuaries of the regional synods will be trained to assist congregations to talk to one another and move towards the process of unification in terms of the Provisional Church Order.
- Thirdly, facilitators will be made available to assist people from both churches to listen to one another with respect.

The Joint Leadership Team, consisting of the moderatures and the regional moderators of URCSA and the DRC, will meet again in February 2018. If the above decisions are in place by 2018, unification will be possible within the next eight years. The movement towards unification has started! This is indeed a massive step forward.

Having a future with Maranatha

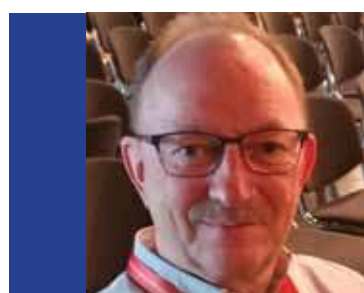
On 24 August this year the leadership of URCSA and Maranatha Reformed Church of Christ met in Benoni to talk about future co-operation.

Under the leadership of Prof Leepo Modise of URCSA and Prof Jacob Manala from the MRCC it was decided to draw up a Memorandum of Agreement. In this agreement at least the following three issues will be addressed: the possible acknowledgement of each other's training, the possible calling of each other's ministers, and the beginning of a process that may lead to future unification.

It was a fruitful meeting which paved the way for healthy cooperation in the short and long run.



URCSA and MRCC meeting



The publication of URCSA NEWS is made possible by a generous contribution by the United Protestant Church in Belgium. Rev Marc Loos (photo) is a member of the Synodical Council of the UPCB, and influential in assuring these funds for us. A sincere word of thanks to the UPCB and Rev Loos!

Jointly declaring ... justice!

Something amazing happened on July 5, 2017, in Wittenberg in Germany. A service was held in the "City Church" in Wittenberg on that Wednesday, and during the service a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification was signed by Reformed churches, Methodists, Lutherans and Roman Catholics!

Wittenberg is the town in which Martin Luther, the Reformer, nailed his 95 theses on the church door 500 years ago. These were statements against some of the practices in the Roman Catholic Church of the time that blurred the relationship between God and believers. Luther taught that God justifies believers entirely from outside themselves; they do not need to do good works and pay the church. We are justified by God purely on the basis of our faith.

It was this rediscovery of the Biblical truth that justification happens through faith alone that started the Reformation. However, 500 years later, on July 5, 2017, a new Reformation started happening: one of uniting the churches again.

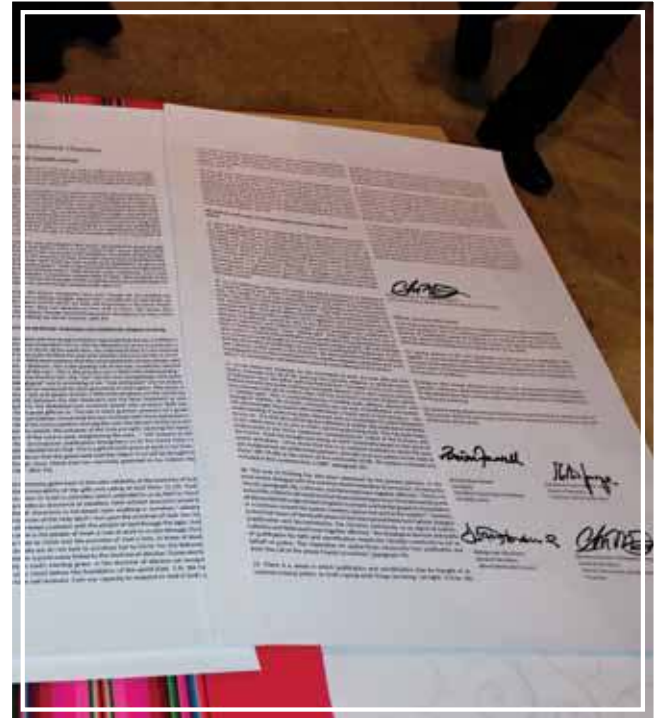
Actually, during the service two documents were signed. The first was the Wittenberg Witness. It was signed by the General Secretaries of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Communion of

Reformed Churches. In this document the Lutherans and Reformed churches agreed to move together "from conflict to communion". In future Lutherans and Reformationists will engage in communicating with one another.

The highpoint of the service, however, was the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. It is almost unbelievable. Here the churches agree that they are no longer the fighting churches of 500 years ago. They now all agree Roman Catholics included: we are justified by faith alone.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) that signed the JDDJ on behalf of their member churches put special emphasis on two issues during the signing:

The first is that justification is closely linked to justice. As God justifies us, we need to see that justice is done in the world.



The second issue emphasised that the church should not only be on the lookout for justice to be carried out to women, children, the disabled and people of all races, but justice is also to be done to the natural world, the environment.

The Pope was not there, but he sent a message to support this event. And he signed it simply "Francis". This is his name without a title!

Quite a few members of URCSA attended this service. The Moderamen was there, as well as the delegation of the World Communion of Reformed Churches that was holding its conference in the nearby city of Leipzig. The previous moderator of URCSA, Prof Mary-Ann Plaatjies van Huffel was there as well and participated in the liturgy.

URCSA honours the values of this historical event. We value the idea of unification. We are committed towards unifying the church of Christ here on earth. We also value justice, which is gender justice, economic justice, racial justice and creation justice.

Wow, what a day it was! And what a future it will open!



'I was there,' – Pieter Grove

"I was there," says Pieter Grove, "when the synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church decided in 1975 that racism was a sin."

At present, Rev Pieter Grove is the Moderator of the Cape Synod (URCSA). How did it happen that he was at this historical meeting in 1975?

Pieter Grove grew up in Worcester where the Synodical Centre of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church was situated.

In 1975 when he was 17 years old, his mother encouraged him to attend the Synod of "our church" (the Dutch Reformed Mission Church) which was in session at the Synodical Centre there in Worcester. He put on his Sunday clothes and went to the meeting. The meeting was of course open to all races and the ministers did not comment on or refused his presence.

During the session which he attended, a discussion on church unity and racism took place. The Synod then made the momentous decision that racism is sin and that the churches of the Dutch Reformed family should urgently pursue unification.

What impressed Rev Grove as a young man most was not the theological debate, but the dignity and the seriousness of the

whole atmosphere and the way in which the ministers engaged in the discussion.

Two years later he commenced with his studies at the University of the Western Cape to become a minister of the Word. In 1985 he was licenced. His first congregation was Komaggas in Namaqualand. Here he served for 19 years.

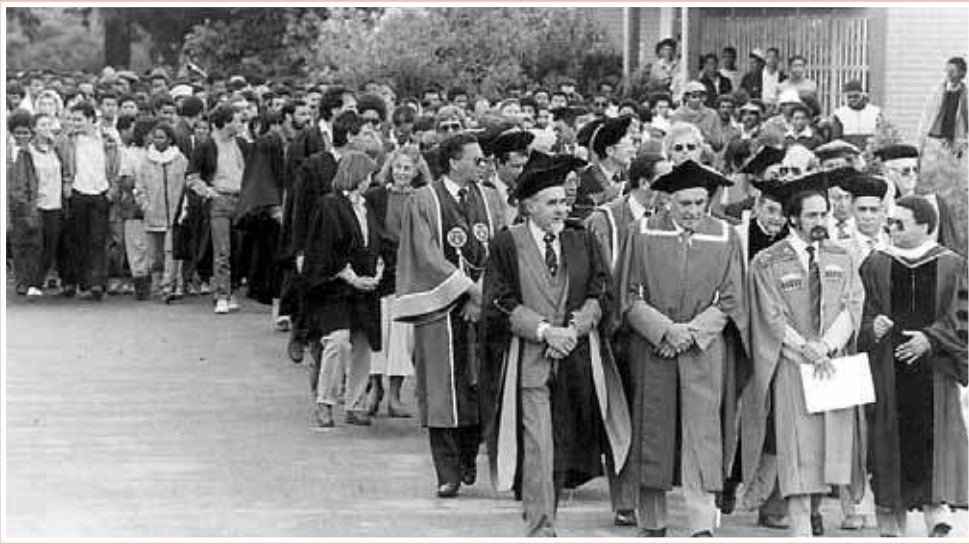
Rev Pieter then became involved with continuing education for ministers of the Word and worked at BUVTON at the University of Stellenbosch. Thereafter he studied at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam in the Netherlands towards finishing a doctoral degree on theology and economics.

Our Rev Grove is a learned man, a committed minister of the Word and a passionate church leader.

All of this happened because his conscience was raised that day in 1975 when the Synod proclaimed racism to be a sin. And he was there. It was 42 years ago and still Rev Grove remains at the forefront of the fight against racism.



Rev Pieter Grove, Moderator of the Cape Synod



Protestant, protest – from the pulpit to the picket-line!

Rev Daniël Kuys, Bellville URCSA

During 2017 we as Protestants celebrate with the world-wide Protestant family the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The person, who occupies centre-stage in the history of the Protestant Reformation, is Martin Luther.

The world, in which Martin Luther was born was a turbulent and worried world. The transition from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century was in many respects a time of despair and in no other country was it more so, than in Luther's Germany. The world was still busy experiencing the after-effects of Medieval times and the obscure footprints of ignorance, superstition and confusion was detected everywhere. The sixteenth century was also, however, a century of discovery and an expanding of horizons. The Church in Rome, which the people depended on without question, became less and less the only embodiment of human knowledge; and this knowledge that the Church at that point chose to distribute among the ordinary people, was also called into question.

Over the course of time opposition and rebellion against the authority of the Church began to smoulder. There was dissatisfaction about the direction in which the Church was moving. The discontent within the Church grew in many hearts. Many before Luther wrestled with the state of the medieval church, but it was on him that the spotlight of sacred history was trained with full focus and revelation. During his teachings on the Psalms and the Letters of the apostle Paul at the Wittenberg University, in the spring of 1513, Luther discovered a truth in Romans 1:16-17: "the just shall live by faith." This discovery would change his view of the Biblical revelation completely and fundamentally, and that would characterize his future public appearances.

After a long battle in faith and his teaching responsibility, he was eventually ready for his real task in life. All that was missing for him was a reason to enter in battle with the Church. It came to him in the person of the Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel, who was charged by the Church with the responsibility of selling indulgences for freeing souls from purgatory before they would be allowed in heaven. These and other corrupt practices within the Church caused Luther to act.

In opposition to the teachings of the Church, Luther wrote his own teachings, called the 95 Theses. On October 31, 1517, at twelve o'clock in the afternoon, Luther walked briskly in the direction of the Wittenberg city church and nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church. Luther did this out of protest against the teachings of the Church. This was also the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Luther faced the Church authorities of his time head-on, despite the powerful position they occupied. The Protestant movement was born.

Protesting against what we believe is wrong in Church and society, is inherent in our Theological Tradition. Protestants never turn a blind eye to what is wrong. Protestants protest! We act! We speak up! We differ! We correct! Protestants also know that the protest cannot remain in the pulpit and in the Church. The protest must move from the pulpit to the picket-line! Referring to the declaration of the Status Confessionis against apartheid, the Rev David P Botha, snr. (former editor of the then newspaper of URCSA, Ligdraer), wrote in the October 23, 1982, edition that "the status confessionis is a holy protest against an attack on the confession of the Church on the important point of the essence of the Church as the body of Christ." Protestants must always remember, our protest, as a protest in faith, against what is wrong in Church and society is indeed a holy protest!

As we observe this moment in sacred history, reflecting on our Protestant Tradition, celebration is not enough. We must learn new lessons from the Protestant Reformation for our times. We need to be invigorated anew with the spirit of Protestantism, for the Church, our country and the world need Protestants to act and say as Luther said: "Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God!"

OPINION CORNER THE RELEVANCE OF REFORMATION 500

The Reformation and its relevance to the URCSA today

Prof Rothney Tshaka

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa is a church that has its heritage in the Reformed church tradition of Europe. Therefore, it cherishes the ideals of the reformation spirit, which was ignited by Martin Luther, the great proponent of Protestantism. While the mentioned church is associated more with John Calvin of Geneva, it should be stated clearly that there would probably not have been a reformed church, at least not in the manner that we have come to understand the reformation tradition, were it not for Martin Luther.

For this reason, the aforementioned church must celebrate the reformation, which was started by Martin Luther. Yet even more important, it is significant that the reformation is separated from the people who led the protestant movement. If we understand the reason for this, it will enable us to understand the significance of protest and or reformation. It will also allow us as a relatively young church on the continent of Africa to see when it becomes absolutely essential for the church to speak out when the danger of compromising her biggest ideals are at stake. We have seen this during the adoption of the Barmen declaration during the time of Nazi Germany, but closer to home we have seen the adoption of the Belhar confession during the heydays of legal apartheid.

The challenges facing this imported church tradition have changed drastically over the years. Today the significance of the reformation must be tested on whether or not this imported church tradition was able to percolate African societies. It means contending with half-truths about the African continent and her people. These half-truths are many and varied and I refer to examples thereof just briefly here: The mistaken perception that there has been no divine intervention in Africa prior to the arrival of a western expression of Christianity. That Africans never had a conception of God but only worshipped idols, the fact that African history was deliberately contorted and distorted by both missionaries and explorers to enable the West to conquer Africa and Africans and even feel justified in that conquest.

The URCSA, which is the custodian of the Belhar Confession, must now ask critical questions to the pervasive



nature of western epistemologies that continue to render Africans as half human beings even in the country of their birth. Issues such as #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, #AfricanizingTheCurricula and many similar calls are calls that ask the URCSA to reconfigure aspects of Africanity, which were intentionally downplayed as a condition for inclusion into this new faith tradition. More than 500 years later we still find ourselves as a church with no curricula of its own that speaks to the lived experiences of those on the margins of society. Interlocutors are still of western origin and there is a sense of looking down on those who should in fact frame our questions for public discourse today. More than 500 years later Africans still do not enjoy the benefits linked to the land and the economy. These and many more are issues that will make this confession tangible only if realized. These, and many more matters, are all issues that feed the nervous condition in South Africa today. The country at the moment is facing a nervous condition because partly, the church has not done enough to agitate for the equitable sharing of the land and the economy, the questions of race and racism have still not been dealt with in a manner that makes social cohesion real and tangible. Words such as social cohesion etc., invariable ask the question, social cohesion for whom and for what? This is so because a number of people feel alienated. All these troubles are compounded by a lack of ethical leadership of those elected by the majority. The essence of the reformation will be exemplified in the churches perpetual identification with those on the margins of society.

Something to sing about

Dr Dawid Kuyler

What does it mean to celebrate 500 years of the Reformation? Maybe we can start by reminding each other about the five main issues of the Reformation. All five is relevant for our day.

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone):

The Bible alone is our highest authority.

Sola Fide (Faith alone):

We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Sola Gratia (Grace alone):

We are saved by the grace of God alone.

Solus Christus (Christ alone):

Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Saviour and King.

Soli Deo Gloria (To the Glory of God alone):

We live for the glory of God alone.

The Reformation was not only about the right theology (God), but also helped the congregations to sing about and for God. Martin Luther was one of the Reformers that brought congregational singing back to the church. In the Roman Catholic Church of his time, the priests and the choirs were responsible for the singing during the services. The congregants were merely spectators and not active participants.

In contrast to other notable reformers of his day, Luther believed that music was “a gift of God to be nurtured and used by man for his delight and edification, as a means for giving praise to the Creator, and as a vehicle for the proclamation of God’s Word.” – See more at: <http://lutheranreformation.org/history/>

singing-the-reformation/#sthash.c8mfW2Y6.dpuf

When we as a congregation sing during services on a Sunday, we are picking the fruits of the Reformation. Luther helped us with the following:

The singing of the congregation is not an add-on to the liturgy but an integral part of the liturgy. It is just as important as all the other elements in the liturgy. Through singing the congregation actively takes part in the different elements of the liturgy.

Martin Luther felt it is necessary that the congregation should sing in the language they understand and therefore he wrote and translated hymns into German.

In Luther’s time, all the hymns were in Latin. People need to understand what they are singing. The Reformers brought back the singing of the Psalms and John Calvin helped a great deal with this.

In celebrating Reformation 500 we surely enjoy our congregational singing and we can thank the Reformers for their contribution. I think we as children of the Reformation should again ask a few questions about the singing in our congregations. Many will tell you in URCSA we enjoy singing. It is true but we have many songs in our hymnbook that we never sing. I wonder why? We enjoy choruses but we never ask about the theological correctness of the words. Our choirs seldom help the congregation to sing new songs from the hymnbook. Where are our musicians and poets to write and set new songs?



Like a child of the Reformation I would like to conclude with text from Scripture: Revelation 5:8-10

“And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

The Reformation set us free to sing a new song about God’s wonderful deeds. Let us continue singing.

OFFICE OF THE URCSA GENERAL SYNOD

RE-ADVERTISEMENT: GENERAL SECRETARY POST

The position of the General Secretary: General Synod of URCSA is vacant. Such appointment is a performance-based contract for a period of five (5) years. The General Secretary is responsible to manage and lead the General Synod strategically to realize the vision and mission of URCSA.

The Office of the URCSA GENERAL SYNOD is an equal opportunity, representative employer. It is the intention to promote representivity (race, gender and disability) in the Church through the filling of positions. Candidates whose appointment will promote representivity will therefore receive preference. Persons with disability are especially encouraged to apply. An indication of a representivity profile by applicants will expedite the processing of applications.

APPLICATION: Forward your application, stating the relevant reference number to:

The Moderator, Office of the URCSA GENERAL SYNOD, 68 Sooliman Street, Mohadin, POTCHEFTSROOM, 2530

CLOSING DATE: 6 October 2017 @16:00

NB: *This is a RE-ADVERTISEMENT and applicants who applied with the first advertisement, must apply again.*

GENERAL:

Applications must be accompanied by a recently updated comprehensive CV and certified copies of qualifications, Driver’s License and Identity Document, service certificates of previous employers stating occupation and proof of relevant experience in the field of the post. The copies must be correctly certified on the copy itself, not at the back. The certification must not be older than 3 months. Qualifications and driver’s license submitted will be subjected to verification checking with relevant institutions. Should you be in possession of a foreign qualification(s), it must be accompanied by an evaluation certificate from the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). Please take note that faxed, e-mailed and late applications will not be accepted. Applications must be mailed timeously. Late applications will not be accepted or considered. Correspondence will be limited to shortlisted candidates only. If you have not been contacted within 3 months of the closing date of this advertisement, please accept that your application was unsuccessful. The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) General Synod is under no obligation to fill a post after the advertisement thereof and reserves the right to re-advertise before a shortlist is compiled.

POST GENERAL SECRETARY: REF NO: GS 02/09/2017

SALARY: See URCSA General Synod Scales and benefits (Contact Moderator for details)

CENTRE : URCSA GENERAL SYNOD OFFICE, MAMELODI, PRETORIA

REQUIREMENTS:

- A relevant qualification or equivalent experience in the field of management is required.
- The candidate should be a member of URCSA.
- Ability to develop a strategic vision and mission for the office.
- Leadership and management competencies as demonstrated through administrative competence, good interpersonal and communication skills and problem solving, judgment and decision making abilities.
- Knowledge of the integrated ministry model and the current operation of URCSA in relation to its Church order and regulations in all levels.
- Knowledge and understanding of ecumenical relation and partnership.
- Ability to provide innovative leadership in initiating, developing and reviewing financial and administrative strategies.
- Ability to lead and manage a diverse group of ministers, staff members, ministries and members in general.
- Provide guidance, intellectual stimulus and professional leadership to heads of departments within the office.
- Demonstrate competencies and skills in change management and transformation in URCSA.
- Proven experience in liaising with external stakeholders at national levels and beyond.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS:

- Participate in constructing a new ethical and servant leadership in URCSA in general.
- Develop creative and innovative approaches to transform URCSA’s core business.
- Establish URCSA as a leader in corporate, ecclesiastical governance and the promotion of sustainability.
- Foster a service-centered and high performance culture through effective talent management.
- Oversee effective implementation of URCSA operational plans.
- Enhance service excellence, quality and efficiencies through effective use of technology, processes and systems in line with URCSA’s Church order and regulations.
- Practice professional citizenship.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To be present in the congregations and assemblies of the church as a spokesperson for the church’s mission, a pastor and a listener to the needs and opportunities that is before the church in its various contexts of ministry.
- To provide vision, counsel, and support to assist the work of the General Synod and the General Synodical Commission, including reports with recommended actions.
- To enable ministries and governing bodies to be guided by clear priorities, goals, and objectives that can direct the allocation of resources in the implementation of the church’s mission.

- To administer Financial Administration, properties and other related matters as well as supervision over office personnel.
- To work with staff and the Finance Manager to prepare a comprehensive budget.
- To keep record of income and expenditure. All moneys received, shall be banked at a registered bank that is approved by the ministry for Finance and Administration.
- She/he shall be an additional member of the Ministry for Service and Witness.
- She/he shall be the scribe and additional member for the Ministry for Finance and Administration, Executive as well as the Synodical Commission.
- She/he shall be responsible for the safekeeping of all monies, documents, books, correspondence and other properties connected to the office.
- To manage archival material of the Synod together with the scribe and become the ex-officio member of the Ministry for Publication and Archives.
- In assistance to the scribe, handle the general administrative responsibilities of the Synod like Publications, Printing, sending minutes, Notices etc. as it may be instructed by the Synod, General Synodical Commission, the Ministry for Administration and Finance as well as the executive commission of the latter.
- To oversee the payments of all expenditures after having satisfied him/herself of the legitimacy thereof.
- To oversee the implementation of the human resources policies, procedures and practices including the development of job description for all staff.
- To oversee the efficient and effective day to day operation of the organization.
- To implement a performance management process for all staff that includes monitoring the performance of staff on an ongoing basis and conducting an annual performance review.
- (Oversee/Ensure) the payments of affiliation fees to the Ecumenical bodies.
- To compile statistics and information for the Year book and report accordingly.
- She/he shall prepare a budget for the office and present it to the Synod and or General Synodical Commission for approval.
- To liaise and correspond with the Ecumenical Partners.
- To handle any other matter as may be instructed by the Synod, Synodical Commission as well as matters tabled in this Regulation.
- The General Secretary presents a report of his/her responsibilities to the Synod or the General Synodical Commission.

ENQUIRIES : Rev Prof LJ Modise
TEL : +2782 949 4164
Email : moderator.gs@urcsa.org.za

CAB vier 40 jaar van besondere genade

Die Christelike Afhankheidsbediening (CAB) is 'n terapeutiese groep mense wat vir die afhanklike omgee. "Terapie" beteken gesond maak en dit is die CAB se strewe om mense en hul gesinne wat siek geword het as gevolg van die gebruik van dwelms of alkohol te help om weer gesond te word en gesond te bly.

Dit het meer as 600 lede op Sondag 02 April, 2017, met die CAB se 40ste verjaarsdag by die VGK, Cloetesville, gevier. Ds PJ Grove, Moderator van Kaapland Sinode het die groete boodskap oorgedra en daarna het Ds TD Booker, die eerste Direkteur van CAB, 'n oorsig oor die geskiedenis gegee, waar en hoe dit alles begin het. Ds Jurie van Rooy, huidige direkteur van CAB, het 'n inspirerende boodskap gebring uit Jeremia 32: 8-15. As CAB moet ons grond gaan koop, soos die profeet Jeremia. Maar grond in die sin dat ons in die lewe van mense belê wat in die samelewing verstoot word, soos die Belhar Belydenis sê: "... dat God op 'n besondere manier die God van die noodlydende, die arme en die verontregte is ..." Jesus het ons immers almal losgekoop deur sy kosbare bloed. En daarom is dit die taak van die CAB om grond te gaan koop, al lyk dit soms ook hoe donker (volledige preek is beskikbaar op die CAB facebookbladsy).

Die Heilige Nagmaal is gevier onder leiding van Ds Claudette Williams, waartydens alle teenwoordige leraars by die tafel aangesit het. Lede wat die afgelope 40 jaar op die hoofbestuur gedien het, is vereer met sertifikate waaronder die volgende: Ds E Leeuw, Ds TD Booker, Ds J Fransman, Ds PJ Burger, Ds C Hendricks, Ds J Strauss, Ds TJ Fredericks, Ds I Potgieter, Ds M Plaatjies van Huffel, Ds R Nel, Ds J Cupido, Ds D Coetzee, Ds B Farao, Ds CJ Swart, Ds O Phillips, Ds AJ Kotze, Ds J

Van Rooy en Ds Claudette Williams. Mnre J Lackay, I Pienaar, R Titus, W Willemse, S Richards, J Salie, A Van Niekerk, W Pietersen, A Williams, Me L Van Rooy, Mev C Dramat, Mev L Minnaar, Mev W Mckuur, Mev A Plaatjies en Mev T Rossouw.

'n Oomblik van stilte is gehou vir afgestorwe lede wat op die hoofbestuur gedien het. Ons dink aan Di DA Nel, FW Jacobs, A Van Wyk, L De Bruyn, D Heyns, Mnre. M Wagenaar, G Matthews, J Isaacs en JJ Pietersen.

Die verrigtinge is afgesluit met 'n tee en versnaperings en soos altyd, 'n genotvolle CAB-kuiertjie. 'n Feesbundel is ook uitgedeel aan almal wat teenwoordig was. Die feesvieringe sal die hoogtepunt bereik met die CAB nasionale kongres wat sal plaasvind vanaf 29 September 1 Oktober, 2017, waar dit alles begin het, naamlik Steinthal, Tulbagh. Die Saterdagmiddag sal daar 'n feesdinee aangebied word. Lede word gevra om so spoedig moontlik hul registrasievorms te stuur na die hoofkantoor. Registrasievorms is ook beskikbaar op die CAB- facebookbladsy.

Ander vieringe het ook plaasgevind oor die hele Suid-Afrika met 15 streke wat op hul eie bymekaargekom en feesgevier het.

As CAB is ons innige dankbaar dat die Here ons vir 40 jaar gedra het en ons sien uit om instrumente in sy hande te wees vir die volgende 40 jaar waar Hy ons gebruik in die heling van afhanklikes en hul gesinne.



From shame to shame

Ishmael Phara

ACYM reflection on the current debate about gender-based violence and women killings

South Africa has been embroiled for the past few months on the scourge of women being abused and killed by their loved ones. The case of Karabo Mokoena from Soweto, who was allegedly killed by her boyfriend and burned, has sparked a social crisis that led to a social media outcry termed #MenAreTrash. It was aimed at raising awareness about the deep-seated cries of women who continue to be abused by their partners and loved ones.

The crisis has added salt to the already visible wounds of gender-based violence, wounds that have always been the shame of an unequal democratic patriarchal society. The failure of the ruling elite to work hand in glove with the church in shaping an equal society, leaves all of us to be blamed for this shame. The failure of the moral regeneration program by the church and government is now in the limelight to be seen by everyone.

As a country, we have moved from the shame of apartheid and a patriarchal system that has bedevilled our communities for many years, to the shame of unequal democracy where women are still seen and treated like tools and properties that can be used for sexual desires, household chores and punching bags.

We have moved from shame to shame, because we have allowed ourselves to be defined by our genders, not by our ability to work as one creation of God in realizing his purpose for humanity.

We have moved from shame to shame, because as young men we have inherited the devil's mentality that we can only be seen as real men if we have multiple sexual relationships, if we are able to control and use our women the way we want and even worse to harass and kill them once we are done using them.

As young men in the CYM, we must also take blame because we have done nothing much in our social and spiritual programs to address this shame that has bedevilled our sisters. We are to be blamed because we are silent about gender-based violence taking place in the country every five minutes; we have allowed ourselves to be stuck in the comfort zone disguised in spirituality without addressing the real societal problems that our sisters face day to day.

The church has played a significant role in making sure that the apartheid government is defeated. Young people like Tsietsi Mashinini of the Methodist Church in Soweto played a significant role in 1976 in making sure that all people are treated equally in terms of education and the right to belong.

It is up to us, the youth of today in the church, to denounce the shame of gender-based violence and come out strongly to say: "Yes, we are to be blamed but enough is enough. Yes, we have moved from shame to shame but now it's enough."

In conclusion I quote the words of Jesus Christ in Mark 3:25, 27 where He says:

"If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand."

"In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house."

Unless we, as a society, realize that we are children of one house, created purposefully by God to fulfil his promise of a better life, we are not going to stand.

Most importantly, if, as CYM members, a strong man in us is tied up by the devil, if our minds are tied up by the devil, if our dreams of a better church and societies are tied up, if our relationships with other genders are tied up then we will forever be plundered. Therefore, let's all stand untied and say no to gender-based violence through our actions and programs, lest we find ourselves moving from shame to shame.

*Written on behalf of CYM Central Executive Committee
By IL Phara, CEC Deputy Chair*



RESPECT



LISTEN



LOVE



EMBRACE

URCSA and DRC leadership committed to the Season of Human Dignity

At the first bilateral meeting of the newly elected leadership of URCSA and DRC in Kempton Park in April the Season of Human Dignity was endorsed as one of the vehicles towards church unification. The Season of Human Dignity provides practical ways in which the churches may embody the theology of the Confession of Belhar.

The leadership received the products of the Season of Human Dignity with enthusiasm. These products have been developed to support congregations and other church meetings in the movement to restore the dignity of every human being. The Christian Literature Fund (CLF) and Bible Media are invaluable partners in this process.

Because healing work is God's work we need to start with prayer. We need to cry out to God to bring about the deep-seated change in the hearts of people. The Prayer Guide for the Season of Human Dignity is a booklet that was designed to help groups of followers of Jesus Christ to pray for this change of heart. The liturgies can be used as devotionals in church meetings and gatherings. The four values of the Season of Human Dignity – respect, listening, embracing and selfless love – provide the themes of the prayer liturgies. Each liturgy consists of three movements: receiving, sharing and giving and commitment. What we receive from God we share amongst one another and give away to others. The Prayer Guides are available online at <https://www.clf.co.za/season/prayer-guides>. It is available in English, Afrikaans, Sotho, Tswana and Xhosa. There are printed copies available at which you can order free of charge from CLF.

Southern Africa is a deeply divided society. These divisions affect us as Christians and churches. In the restoration of the dignity of people we need to reach out to each other across the boundaries that divide us. It is only when people enter

into relationships with one another that trust, respect and love can grow. The Season of Human Dignity has published a book entitled *Walking Together* – developing a community of sustainable friendships to assist Christians to develop cross-group friendships. People meet in small groups for fifteen weeks for faith conversations and friendship activities. The book provides very clear guidelines regarding the formation of the groups, the process, meetings and for leaders of the groups. The Season of Human Dignity encourages URCSA and DRC congregations to join hands in the formation of such groups. *Walking Together* can be ordered from Bible Media @ R60 per copy.

The national task team of the Season of Human Dignity met on 13-14 March 2017 in Kempton Park for our annual meeting. During the opening devotional Rev Barnabas Ngqozela read Ps 133. It focusses on the theme Embrace. The next morning Rev Rethie van Niekerk used the Respect liturgy from the Prayer Guide. These liturgies sustained us throughout our meeting. Rev Collin Goeiman provided training in the *Walking Together* process by engaging us in an activity from the book.

God is doing wonderful work of healing and restoration in and through us, God's church. We invite you to join in this movement towards dignity for all.

*Dr Elize Morkel
Chairperson Season of Human Dignity*

Profile on Rev William Julius, GS Scribe

Rev William Julius was born on June 20, 1961, in the small town Springbok in Namaqualand. He recalls his time growing up being in a strong Christian home with solid values and big dreams.

“One of the lessons that I learned early on in my life, is to work hard and to always do my best. I finished my high school career at a very young age and decided to pursue my university career at the University of Western Cape. It was only in grade twelve while I was attending a youth camp that I decided to become a pastor. I completed my first degree, a Bachelors Degree in Theology (B.Th.), in 1984 and my Honors Degree in Theology shortly thereafter in 1986.

“My first congregation was in Keetmanshoop, Namibia, where I stayed for eight years till the end of 1994. During my eight years in Keetmanshoop, I got married and I also completed a Higher Education Diploma at the University of Namibia. One of my dreams was to study overseas and this dream became a reality at the beginning of 1995 when I had the opportunity to study in the United States in Grand

Rapids, Michigan, at Calvin College. I completed my Master’s Degree in Educational Ministry at the end of 1997 and started a career as Pastor at Madison Square Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, where I was Pastor of Children’s Ministries until 2004. During this time I was responsible for the recruitment and training of new leaders and volunteers in this department as well as the planning and implementation of new projects. At the end of 2004 an opportunity opened up to become the Pastor for Congregational Ministries. I provided leadership and vision for the Small Group Ministries, the Gift based Ministry and Pastoral Care in the congregation.

It was at the end of 2008 that I completed my Masters Degree in Business Management (MBA) at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I moved back to Swakopmund, Namibia, in 2008 and started teaching at Namib High School in 2009. I received a calling as Pastor to the Uniting Reformed Church: Narraville in Walvisbay at the end of 2009. I am currently serving as Pastor in this ministry.”



Funding available for HIV/Aids projects

Rev MP Manasse

The Core Ministry for Service and Witness of the General Synod, hereby invites Presbyteries, Congregations or any other Ministry or Organisation within URCSA which has an active HIV/Aids project and is in need of funding, to apply to the ministry for assistance.

In the past we have been blessed with funding from the United Protestant Church in Belgium for HIV/Aids projects within URCSA, and as ministry

has recently entered into a new agreement with their *Commission Kerk en Wereld* to continue with such funding.

Part of the agreement reached is that:

- the funds should be distributed equitably to at least 10 partners within URCSA and include all regions on provision that there is an HIV/Aids project.

- the aim of such a project is to support emotionally, spiritually and materially those communities or individuals suffering from HIV/Aids through visitation, care giving, pastoral counselling or any other means.

Interested parties may apply by submitting a short essay or overview of their project by the end of October (e.g. what the project is about and means of current funding; etc.), to the Scribe of the CMSW, Rev MP Manasse at e-mail: mpm@vodamail.co.za.

Mother’s day celebrations 2017, URCSA at Zwide

Busi Somfula



Ms Mamase

The weather in PE was great; all members of the congregation came to church wearing their informal clothing. Most of the mothers were wearing traditional attire. Before the sermon the mothers were singing, rejoicing and praising the Lord. We were fortunate that the preacher of the day was a woman, Ms Mamase.

Ms Mamase delivered a beautiful and inspiring sermon on Genesis 21:1-8:

Mothers should share words of wisdom when opening their mouths.

- God is never too late, there is hope and we should trust Him to help us with whatever challenges we are confronted with: in our lives, work, school or families, we must never give up hope. God will

help us through all our trials and tribulations so we must persevere – God opens doors that no one can shut.

- The Lord that healed the blind man can also heal us.
- We must believe in God because all things are in his hands.
- Someday, in God’s time, God will make us laugh as He did with Sara and Abraham.

Ms Mamase also warned us against not believing in God and she shared with us a story about Elizabeth and Zachariah and how God shut Zachariah’s mouth because he did not believe God’s promise. She said we must never underestimate or undermine God’s promises.

Legal Notice

Cape Synod:

Rev Godfrey D Baartman: Forfeiture of status

(Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the Regulation regarding the Status of ministers of the Word)

Dates

13 – 14 September 2017: Phororo SC (Kathu)
15 – 16 September 2017: Northern Synod SC
(Dienssentrum, Mamelodi)

3 – 6 October 2017: KZN Synod
2 – 5 May 2018: Namibia Regional Synod

NTS contact sessions

The second contact session of NTS for 2017 was held at the Mamelodi Dienssentrum from 25 to 28 May, 2017.

On Thursday evening the contact session was opened with a message by Dr Zorodzai Dube, a New Testament lecturer at the University of Pretoria (UP). Since 25 May this year was both Ascension Day and Africa Day, he used the prayer of Jesus in John 17 to highlight the meaning of Christ's Ascension, as it relates to the realities of our African continent. On Friday the program was focused on the part-time students, since the full-time students were attending lectures at UP. There were sessions on the URCSA Church Order (Prof Christina Landman), preaching and serving the Lord's Supper (Prof Klippiess Kritzing) and implementing the IM model (Rev Peter Adams). On Saturday there was

a session on welcoming children at the Lord's table (Dr TJ Nthakhe), the message of the Belhar Confession (Prof Nico Botha), the implementation of Belhar today (Prof Reggie Nel), a meeting of the whole student body (chaired by the SRC) and a viewing of a DVD on the life of Martin Luther. On Sunday morning there was a worship service in which Katleho Mokoena, a senior student, preached the sermon and Prof Klippiess Kritzing served the Lord's Supper.

The last NTS contact session for 2017 was held on 24-27 August at the Shaft 17 conference centre in Crown Mines, Johannesburg. On Saturday morning there was a conference where papers on the three traditional Reformed confessions (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dort) were presented by senior students. On Saturday afternoon the NTS



students engaged in a joint outreach program to take clothes to an orphanage, together with the CFM/MBB of the local URCSA Presbytery. This was a very meaningful event, and is part of the SRC's drive to build partnerships with different ministries of the URCSA.



On Sunday 27 August 2017 Ezekiel Mafoka Mothamaha was licensed during a service in Botshabelo URCSA in Soweto, Johannesburg. He is our most recent "proponent" and a product of the Northern Theological Seminary.

Licensing ceremony on 27 August, 2017

For the first time the MFTT arranged a licensing ceremony in a congregation of the Southern Synod. This took place in the Botshabelo congregation in Diepkloof, Soweto on Sunday 27 August.

One candidate minister (proponent) was licensed on the occasion, Mr ME Mothamaha, from the Moroka congregation. Professor Christina Landman and Rev Lesiba Kekana, the actuaries of the Northern and Southern Synods respectively, officiated jointly at the occasion. The new licensing document, which was approved by the General Synod in October 2016, was used for the first time. This interactive format of licensing added an atmosphere of celebration to the solemn spiritual nature of the occasion. A copy of the Ministry Covenant/Pledge, which has now replaced the former Licensing Oath, is attached below.

NTS principal

After 14 years in which NTS has been managed by a team of volunteer ministers and members, the management committee has succeeded in raising enough funds to appoint a principal.

A selection panel was appointed to manage the process but has not yet completed its task. It is hoped that a principal will be appointed soon and will assume responsibilities before the end of 2017. This represents a big step forward for the ministerial formation program of the two northern synods of the URCSA. We ask for the prayer of the whole URCSA that this appointment will enhance the quality of our ministerial formation program.

Centenary of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria

The Faculty of Theology at UP is a hundred years old this year. The university established the Faculty in 1917 in partnership with the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika. The Dutch Reformed Church was given its own section in the Faculty of Theology at UP in 1938 but in 2000 the two sections united. Other churches that formally recognize UP for their ministerial formation are the Uniting Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church (FELSISA) and the Baptist Church (CTBS). In 2011 the URCSA also became a formal church partner of the Faculty. We wish to extend our warm congratulations to the UP Faculty of Theology. May its contribution to the churches and communities of our country grow and expand.

Recent research by NTS students

The vision statement of NTS, as contained in its recent strategic plan (2016-2020), reads as follows: "Promoting African Reformed praxis for quality ministerial formation in the URCSA."

Flowing from this, the NTS mission statement includes:

Nurturing quality ministers to serve the URCSA within a community devoted to spiritual growth, academic excellence and practical skills;

Radiating theological renewal in congregations by fostering life-long learning in various ministries;

Developing an African theology from the perspective of a reformational worldview.

To implement the second bullet point above (to radiate theological renewal in the URCSA), NTS wishes to make known to the broad membership of URCSA the titles of the dissertations and theses that our students and alumni have produced in the recent past. We encourage everyone to study these research results. We hope that this research will challenge you to respond so that you can make your own theological contribution to the life of our church and of society at large. Due to time pressure, we were not able to get hold of all the titles since 2015, but we will supply the others in a future issue of URCSA News.

Masters dissertations

M Gqweta: Intergenerational ministry in a township congregation, MA (Theology), UP, 2015.

EM Monhla: Africanization within the URCSA? A critical focus on how the Church Order relates to African marriages MA (Theology), UP, 2015.

MR Makgobya (Ms): Human dignity and people living with HIV/Aids. The role of a rural local congregation, MA (Theology), UP, 2016.

NM Malatji (Ms): Mothering orphans. The role of the local church in a rural township, MA (Theology), UP, 2016.

MS Matsepe: Building marriages in urban townships. A pastoral study, MA (Theology), UP, 2016.

WM Moime (Ms): The inadequacy of a model of discipleship in respect of the decline of youth ministry in Rustenburg/Tlhabane Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, MTh, UP, 2016.

JB Pitikoe: The evaluation of Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa in relation to the three marks of the church: Discipline in the Southern synod, MTh, Unisa, 2016.

KC Mtshweni (Ms): The dignity of elderly poor people in an urban township: A pastoral perspective, MTh, UP, 2016.

TZ Sebege: Developing a contextual approach to ecological mission: A case for the Christian Youth Ministry at Melodi ya Tshwane, MTh, Unisa, 2016.

AE Tshibalo: "To stand where God stands." The mission praxis of the Melodi ya Tshwane congregation, MTh, Unisa, 2016.

ME Mothamaha: Ministry to political prisoners on Robben Island (1960-1990). A Church History approach, MTh, UP, 2017.

KK Mokoena: Black aesthetics and the Son of Man film, MTh, UP, 2017.

EM Mofokeng: Belhar Confession and liturgy. A hymnological study, MTh, UP, 2017.

Doctoral theses

T Lephakga: Dealing lightly with the wounds of my people: A theological ethical critique of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, DTh, Unisa, 2015.

EM Monhla: Africanization within the URCSA? A critical focus on how the Church Order relates to African marriages and baptism, PhD, Unisa, 2017.

BB Senokoane: Blackness as the way to and state of salvation. A search for rue salvation in South Africa today. D Th, Unisa 2017.

The church must die to unite

Leepo Modise



Prof Leepo Modise, Moderator of URCSA

The church has lived for a very long time promoting and maintaining divisions in the church based on race, creed, tradition, language and culture. The church in general and the DRC family of churches in particular, must die to live a new united life in Christ.

It is my perspective that church unity should start where the church is, meaning the local congregations.

Both the URCSA and the DRC have accepted the Provisional Church Order that allows the fast tracking of church unity practically. The vision to pull members of the DRC and URCSA together is captured in the preamble of the Provisional Order: "We, therefore, envisage a new reunited church in the DRC family, which is missional, committed to the Biblical demands of love, reconciliation, justice and peace".

This vision will only be achieved through selfless sacrifice in this pilgrimage to unity and justice, hence we are saying in the preamble of the Provisional Order: "We are called to a life, ministry and ecclesiology of obedience and sacrifice. Knowing that walking this road will ask us to put all selfish ambition aside and to give ourselves as Christ did, we do this in active response to the gospel that Christ in His mercy poured out on us. We respond to Christ's love and Spirit who unites us to Christ in a deep and eternal fellowship."

The Belhar Confession and church unity is one aspect that is very serious to both churches. We are all aware that the DRC did not manage to accept the Belhar Confession as the fourth confession in their confessional basis church order, but we always need to be looking more on the positive side of the democratic processes that was utilized by the DRC.

The positive side is that the majority of the DRC members accept the Belhar Confession based on statistics. Secondly the Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) signed by both churches states clearly that the Belhar Confession will be a confession of the reunited church.

These two points need to energize us both, the DRC and URCSA, to participate from local congregation to General Synod level. We have also committed ourselves to journey with the DRC on section 4.6 of the MOA that states: "Where congregations, ministers, and members of the Dutch Reformed Church do not underwrite the Confession of Belhar as an article of faith, we are committed to journey with them."

This is the commitment before God and the church that we need to live and die for, for the sake of the body of Christ. The following are steps I suggest to be followed to actualise Jesus's prayer in John 17:

- The church could use its vehicles (the United Ministry of Service and Witness, Season for Humanity and its theological faculties) to develop a transforming theology for church unity from the local congregations.
- Local congregations could start doing Bible study on church unity and studying together the provisional church order.
- Congregations could start joint church council meetings and joint projects as partners on an equal basis as human beings.

I believe the conclusion of the MOA is the best words to conclude this article: "We do this in obedience and dependence in Jesus Christ who is the Lord of the church."

MINISTRY COVENANT/PLEDGE (approved by General Synod on October 2016)

ACTUARIUS: Throughout Scripture, we see how God calls and sends messengers:

The following passages are read: Isaiah 6:8 (English); Ezekiel 3:3-4 (isiZulu); Mt 4:18-20 (Sesotho).

CANDIDATES: Lord, we have heard your call; we will serve your people with humility and integrity.

ACTUARIUS: As Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa we have affirmed your call and prepared you intellectually, spiritually and practically for the ministry of the Word.

CANDIDATES: We have participated in the church's ministerial formation process to be fully equipped for this joyous calling.

ALL: As families and congregations, we have invested in you, encouraged you and prayed for you.

CANDIDATES: We are deeply grateful to all the people who made it possible for us to stand here today.

ACTUARIUS: The triune God, by Word and Spirit, gathers, empowers and sends the church to the ends of the earth.

CANDIDATES: We believe the message of God as revealed in the Old and the New Testament, we treasure the Scriptures as our only rule for faith and conduct; and we trust the power of God's Word and Spirit to save, heal and transform.

ACTUARIUS: Through the ages, the church of God has expressed its faith in the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

CANDIDATES: We affirm three Creeds as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith, receiving the gospel in unity with believers of all ages, churches and cultures.

ACTUARIUS: The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa is a Reformed church.

CANDIDATES: We stand within the Reformed tradition, by affirming four Confessions – the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, The Canons of Dort and the Confession of Belhar. These Confessions guide the way we interpret Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ. Should we develop an objection to any doctrine in these confessional documents, we will not propagate such views but communicate them to the church, according to the procedures prescribed by the Church Order and supplementary stipulations.

ACTUARIUS: The Reformed tradition must always be reforming.

CANDIDATES: We will pursue this dynamic tradition responsibly in our African context, facing the challenges of harmful theologies and unjust practices.

ACTUARIUS: The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa has an inclusive African identity.

CANDIDATES: We celebrate the riches of our African cultures as opportunities for mutual service and enrichment, and we mobilise them in the cause of unity, reconciliation and justice; *Motho ke motho ka batho*.

ALL: As Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, we are called to serve God, one another and the world.

CANDIDATES: We covenant and pledge together:

- to serve God's people with humility and confidence, seeking the well-being of each man, woman and child;
- to live in the light of Christ, as we engage in the ministry of prayer, worship, teaching, care, witness and service;
- to work for the coming of God's reign of justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

ACTUARIUS: The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa has committed itself to flourish as a Christian community and to serve Southern African society, under your leadership.

CANDIDATES: We covenant and pledge together:

- to carry out our ministry responsibly, with loyalty and obedience to the church's order;
- to equip God's people to exercise their diverse ministries with mutual affirmation and respect;
- to submit willingly to the church's pastoral care, supervision and discipline.

ACTUARIUS: The Lord requires a deep personal commitment from a minister of the Word.

CANDIDATES: As I commit myself to this covenant:

- I promise to discern God's will when seeking a post in a congregation, without using unethical means;
- I promise to continue studying and equipping myself for this ministry;
- I pray that the living God who called me will make me persevere in this calling;
- I give glory to the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

ALL: For from God – and through God – and to God – are all things.

To God be the glory forever! Amen.

.....
Candidate Actarius



Members of URCSA attending the 60 years celebrations of CLF in the Cape



Rev Peter Adams, inducted in Pretoria URCSA (Eersterust) on 21 January 2017



Northern Synod Convention on 7 May 2017 at Moruleng



Rev Betty Wanza, first deaf person to be ordained in URCSA 12d

Forming faith in children Learn through imaginative listening



Christian Literature Fund's series for formation of faith in children, **Tell, tell!**, strongly emphasises the telling and retelling of Bible stories. The value and joy of listening to stories and retelling them is rediscovered and applied. Listen, imagine, tell and enjoy forms the basis of this five-book series.

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