



URCSA NEWS • NUUS

DECEMBER 2024



“FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN”

By Rev Prof Leepo Modise (Moderator)

2024 was a good year filled with celebrations of thirty years of the denomination's existence, a momentous year for us. Now we approach the day of the birth of our Lord Jesus. Christmas reminds us that, the birth of our Lord brings peace, good life, as Prophet Isaiah said: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

In the world of war, violence, and moreover Gender-based-violence which is pandemic in South Africa, Christmas reminds us that the prince of peace was born to bring peace and harmony to humanity. I quote the message of WCC that: "As Christians, we are called to condemn war and violence and work for peace," As Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa as we celebrate Christmas day, we need to remember those who are living in the war zone locally, nationally, and globally. The attitude of Belhar confession should filled our hearts to bring peace, reconciliation, justice, and unity amongst the people of God.

As we celebrate Christmas, we must celebrate within the framework of article 4 of the Church Order and article 4 of Belhar confession that when one is in sorrow, we stand with him/her, or if one is in joy, we rejoice with him/her. We are challenged to think for the poor for the counsellor is born for the poor and the meek. As we celebrate the birth of our Lord, may we also remember those among us who are struggling, hurting, or feeling isolated. May we extend love, kindness, and compassion to one another, reflecting the very heart of our Savior. Wishing you a blessed Christmas and joyous New year. May God be with you and your loved ones.



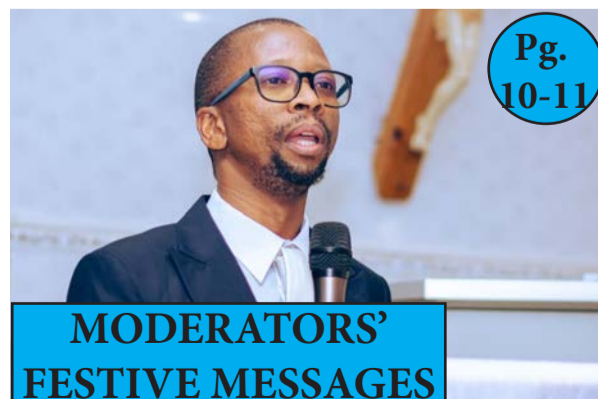
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EDITORIAL

As we bring this year's edition of the URCSA News to a close, we take a moment to reflect on the significant milestones and events that have shaped our community. This year marked a remarkable 30 years of existence for our church, a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and faith of our members. We also acknowledge the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, a critical campaign that aligns with our values of compassion, justice, and equality. As we approach the festive season, we extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. May this special time be filled with joy, peace, and love. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our editorial team for their tireless efforts in producing this publication. Your commitment to sharing our stories and spreading the message of hope is truly appreciated. May God bless you abundantly. Merry Christmas and a happy and blessed 2025

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa or its leadership.



FRAGILITY OF THE SOCIAL ORDER
AND STABILITY OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH
TODAY

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Rev Bonganjalo Mbenenge: General Synod Office Manager

1. Can you tell us a little bit about your background and experience?

I am the son of Rev. and Mrs Mbenenge, my sister and I were raised in Qheberha which is formerly known as Port Elizabeth, and we were groomed in the church as my parents were full-time in the ministry. They were both leaders within the church, being raised in the church as a minister's child was very interesting but we are so grateful for our various church communities within the URCSA.

I am married to Veliswa Mbenenge and we are blessed with 3 precious children, Amandlakuye, Zinzisayo, and Phalo. I completed my Theological studies at the University of Stellenbosch. I then furthered my studies in MA Diaconal Management. I was ordained as a Minister of the Word in Thembaletu, George Western Cape, where I served from 2015-2022.

2. What are your goals for the office from now on?

It is to professionalize the office with systems that are technologically advanced. To develop a Theological center that will produce material for Sunday School, Teenagers, Youth, and Devotional books for men and women. We intend all Churches of the Uniting Reformed Church to have free WIFI for congregants and their communities, to create centers to train people on how to install Solar Panels, especially young people, to create employment. The aim is to have our Churches off the grid by 2030.



Rev Bonganjalo Mbenenge

3. How do you see the office supporting the church's mission and vision?

It is through the Theological center that we seek to empower all the members of our Church from the youngest to the oldest members to have sound Theology and be able to interpret our time with the necessary actions. Secondly, it is how we educate our people through diaconal missions, regarding climate change and disaster management, as mentioned before to provide training for Solar Panels and to advocate for the universal income grant.

4. What are some of your hobbies or interests outside of work?

Spending time with my children and swimming with them. I enjoy listening to podcasts.

5. Do you have a favorite Bible verse or quote that inspires you?

Philippians 1:9-11

6. Are there any new procedures or systems you'll be implementing in the office?

We will implement a Central Communication platform (Intranet). For efficiencies, we will rely on artificial intelligence to streamline our work.

7. How can church members and staff best communicate with you and the office?

Through the office email address and as well as our social media platform.

8. Is there anything you'd like to share with the church family as the office manager?

It is a pleasure to work for our community in this great time of the fourth Industrial Revolution, therefore in order for the church not to be left behind. We need a better system to raise funds to raise the demands of our time. We need the support of each church member.



PROPONENTS READY TO BE CALLED



Franklin Errol Sitzer



Lindiwe Faith Baartman



Marlon Clement Petro



Gerrit Gert Hugo



Niklaas Paulse



Sigcobile Mlota



Itumeleng Dibane

Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"





URCSA Boipatong Demonstrates Commitment to Community Service

On June 11, 2024, the URCSA Boipatong congregation showcased its dedication to community service by donating pairs of shoes to Tsoelopele Full Service School in Sharpeville, near Tshepiso. This initiative is part of the church's annual shoe drive, organized by the Southern Synod.

The primary objective of this drive is to provide learners with essential footwear, enabling them to focus on their education without the discomfort or distraction of inadequate shoes. By collaborating with other community stakeholders, the church aims to enhance the wellbeing of the children and support their educational journey.

The Church Council of Boipatong URCSA expresses gratitude for the warm welcome received at the school.

As James 2:15 reminds us, "Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food... Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." The URCSA Boipatong congregation remains committed to putting faith into action, serving the community, and making a positive impact on the lives of those around them.



Sharpeville Presbytery Celebrates URCSA 30th Anniversary



On May 4, 2024, Sharpeville Presbytery held a memorable 30th Anniversary Celebration at the Klipkop Multipurpose Centre. This milestone event aligned with the URCSA's celebration and aimed to raise funds for the Southern Synod.

Rev MD Makgene delivered a captivating history of URCSA's existence, while Rev OJ Thebe blessed the gathering with a heartfelt sermon. The fundraising effort, led by Juff L Thebe and assisted by CFM, combined dance and fun activities, bringing the community together in a lively and entertaining way.



The event featured food stalls, a Kidzone corner, a community impact corner, and health workers on standby for emergency services. The celebration created lasting memories, fostering joy and unity within the faith community while raising essential funds for the Southern Synod's financial commitment.

The presbytery commission extends its heartfelt gratitude to all participants. As 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

By Rev T Pudumo





RENEWAL OF THE OLD SKIN THAT CONTAINS THE NEW WINE: URCSA DEVELOPMENT TOWARD BETTER FINANCIAL STATUS

By Rev Prof Leepo Modise – GS Moderator

The 8th General Synod of URCSA in Stellenbosch 2022 has lamented the financial status of URCSA at the General Synod level; the Synod decided that SMFA should improve the economic status of the denomination during the recess. The economic status of URCSA is derived from the metaphor that defines the situation of the entire church: “The new wine in an old skin.” In most cases, the old skin spoils the taste of the new wine. This denomination comes from the era of dependence syndrome, which involved financial support from the Dutch Reformed Church and its ecumenical partners. The funding model in this denomination was built from the old system of levy payments from the seven regional synods, which is not guaranteed because of the financial income of the regional Synod. URCSA, as of now, is surviving on the ecumenical partners’ funding and minimal sources from the regional synod. Despite this situation, we still hope that things will turn positive with the assistance of the individual members of URCSA. We are motivated by the following words in Lamentation 3:31: “For *no one is abandoned by the Lord forever, though he brings grief, he also shows compassion, because of the greatness of his unfailing love.*”

The first challenge is the misconception on an operational system of the reformed churches that the General Synod does not have the right to communicate directly with the presbyteries without going through the regional. I challenge the members of URCSA to read and reread Article 8 on the congregational link. The old skin needs to be renewed to contain a sweet taste to bring development and healing to the body. There is a need for a fresh inter-

pretation of this article to allow the General Synod to communicate with its constituency, which is the presbyteries.

The second challenge that has caused URCSA financial constraints was the eruption of COVID-19 in 2020, where church services were suspended, and the general revenue of the church was obtained. Most employees were retrenched, and the countries’ economies were affected, affecting the church’s revenue.

The church’s third challenge is owing the General Synod staff salaries and other benefits that you, the General Synod Executive, and SMFA have negotiated with the Staff members to be patient with the church while SMFA is planning on fund-raising. The General Secretary’s contract has ended, and the church cannot settle the debt to the General Secretary. The post is now vacant and needs to be filled within the next three months; some will argue that the post must not be filled, and this is not an option as the church needs this position for its financial, ecumenical, and administrative purposes.

The fourth challenge in the past five years is that URCSA has experienced severe cases of misunderstanding of Reformed Church polity, which has led specific individuals to approach the courts of law for litigation, which has caused the General Synod to defend the church in the court of law. This litigation has left the church with a debt of plus one million rand for legal costs that will be retrieved from the applicants.

On behalf of URCSA, we are pleading the following:

- ❖ Regional synods to fulfil their obligations by paying over the levy money owed to the General Synod.
- ❖ Presbyteries will administrate the payment of the R1000 Love offering to the General synod; if this amount is paid at once for a particular period by all congregations, it can generate + R780 000.00.

Renewing the old skin to contain the new wine means a total overhaul of the funding model for the General Synod. The income generation stream in the church should change drastically. The poor church is the church that does not have human resources. Experts in development studies will always say that one needs to use what one has to develop. The second point is that poverty is not the absence of food but misuse of resources, moreover, human resources. Therefore, the presence of human beings in the denomination needs to be used maximally as the first resource that the Synod had to improve financial sustainability. For example, to raise one million rands, we need only a thousand God-fearing, willing, and blessed congregants to contribute R1000.00 once out of one million congregations; this is doable. I suggest that the willing and blessed URCSA members should consider this project to raise R93 million at a go from one thousand congregants from ninety-three (93) presbyteries and put them as reserves for future crises.

In conclusion, God, who has been so good to us in managing to run the General synod that has cost us one million rand plus, is the very same God who will guide us through this financial crisis. However, we must humble ourselves before the triune God to achieve all we aim to accomplish during this recess.

General Synodical Commission and UEM Capacity Building Workshop



Introduction

The General Synodical Commission (GSC) 2024 meeting held in Bloemfontein and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) Capacity Building Workshop marked significant moments in the life of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). These events provided an opportunity for reflection, strategy development, and capacity building to address the critical challenges facing our denomination. This report outlines the key deliberations, resolutions, and insights from these gatherings, emphasizing their relevance to URCSA's mission and future sustainability.

General Synodical Commission 2024 Meeting

The GSC meeting was a platform for URCSA to confront pressing issues and discern pathways for renewal and growth. The following key points were discussed:

1. **The Decline in Ministerial Vocations** The church is experiencing a marked decline in young people showing interest in ministry. Unlike previous generations, where enthusiasm for serving as Ministers of the Word was high, today's youth are less inclined to view ministry as a viable calling. This trend poses a significant threat to URCSA's future, as the lack of ordained ministers undermines the church's capacity to sustain its mission.
 - **Contributing Factors:** The materialistic orientation of modern society has shifted priorities, with many individuals focusing on wealth accumulation and secular careers. Additionally, societal pressures and the stigmatization of ministry as an unviable profession discourage young people from pursuing theological training.
 - **Proposed Solutions:**
 - Revive mentorship programs within congregations to inspire young people.
 - Create awareness campaigns emphasizing the spiritual and societal value in collaborations with other educational institutions with the aim of equipping or training our church councils and young people.
2. **Spiritual Apathy and Materialism** Many members of the church have descended from their call to serve the Lord, prioritizing material pursuits over spiritual growth and service. This spiritual apathy manifests in dwindling participation in church activities and a diminished sense of communal responsibility.

- **Proposed Solutions:**
 - Encourage theological reflection on the dangers of materialism.
 - Promote discipleship programs to rekindle spiritual fervor.
 - Use platforms like synodical gatherings and workshops to address these issues candidly.
- 3. **Unemployment and Social Issues** The church is deeply affected by the socio-economic challenges facing the broader community. High unemployment rates, particularly among the youth, exacerbate poverty and despair. A growing concern is the rise in children's deaths due to food poisoning, highlighting systemic failures in food safety and social support systems.
 - **Church's Role:**
 - Advocate for policies that address unemployment and social inequality.
 - Establish feeding schemes and food safety awareness campaigns in vulnerable communities.
- 4. **Litigation and Internal Disputes** The meeting highlighted the troubling trend of church disputes being taken to secular courts, contrary to scriptural mandates and church principles. URCSA is called to rediscover its identity and commitment to resolving conflicts internally, as instructed in Matthew 18. We need to strengthen the use of internal disciplinary structures and conflict resolution mechanisms.
 - Foster a culture of forgiveness, reconciliation, and dialogue within the church.
 - Develop training programs on biblical conflict resolution for church leaders and congregants.
- 5. **Focus on Marginalized and Needy Communities** Participants reaffirmed URCSA's commitment to uplifting broken souls, marginalized groups, and the needy. This aligns with the church's core mission of embodying Christ's love and compassion.
 - **Practical Steps:**
 - Strengthen social outreach programs targeting vulnerable groups.
 - Establish counselling and support services for affected individuals and families.

- Advocate for social justice and systemic change.

6. **Reinvigorating URCSA's Identity** The meeting underscored the importance of URCSA's re-finding itself as a denomination rooted in God's guidance. Participants acknowledged the need for spiritual renewal to navigate current challenges effectively.

- **Key Resolutions:**

- Call on congregations to prioritize prayer and spiritual discipline.
- Organize revival services aimed at rekindling faith and commitment.
- Reaffirm URCSA's foundational values and mission in all activities

UEM Capacity Building Workshop

The UEM Capacity Building Workshop brought together specialized ministries—CMM, CWM, CWL, and CYM—to deliberate on strategies for strengthening URCSA's sustainability. The workshop emphasized collaboration, resource mobilization, and mission alignment.

Fundraising for Sustainability Recognizing the financial challenges facing URCSA, the workshop prioritized fundraising initiatives to ensure long-term sustainability. Each specialized ministry pledged to contribute actively to these efforts. They also resolved in engaging congregations and the broader community with the aim of raising funds for denomination (URCSA). This will be done through various ways including utilize digital platforms for fundraising campaigns.

Conclusion

The GSC 2024 meeting and UEM Capacity Building Workshop were fruitful engagements that provided a roadmap for URCSA to navigate its challenges while remaining faithful to its calling. The discussions and resolutions underscored the need for spiritual renewal, unity, and strategic action. By addressing issues such as the decline in ministerial vocations, spiritual apathy, and social challenges, URCSA can position itself as a beacon of hope and transformation in Southern Africa.

Moving forward, the church is called to recommit to its mission of serving God's people with humility, compassion, and dedication. With collective effort, prayer, and reliance on God's guidance, URCSA can overcome its challenges and emerge stronger, ready to fulfill its role as a transformative force in society.



THE FIRST CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S LEAGUE CONGRESS AND LAUNCH

The journey to General Synod which started at the 6th General Synod sitting in 2012 at Okahandja, Namibia reached the destination at the 8th General Synod sitting at Stellenbosch in Cape in 2022, when the General Synod took a decision to approve the constitution of the Christian Women's League and mandated the General Synod Core Ministry of Congregational Ministry to launch the ministry at General Synod level.

The General Synod Core Ministry for Congregational Ministry, established a task team to be responsible for preparations of the first Christian Women's Ministry congress and the launch.

The first Christian Women's League congress was held from the 26th July to the 28th July 2024 at Forever Resort at Bele Bela. The theme of the congress was Victory through Christ because of the journey travelled from 2012 to 2022.

The congress was constituted by 346 delegates from Free State and Lesotho, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Northern Synod, Southern Synod and Phororo.

In attendance was the General Synod Core Ministry for Congregational ministry Chairperson, Reverend Mmolawa, the members of the task team: Reverend Leputla, Mr PMK. Tladi, Mr N. Mabuza, Reverend Khanyile as a

member of Core Ministry for Congregational Ministry.

Reverend Betha, the General Synod Actuaries and Reverend Professor Modise were also in attendance.

Moderators of Regional Synods, CM representative of Christian Women's League from Regional Synods were also in attendance.

President of Christian Women's Ministry and the President of Christian Youth Ministry were present to bring their fraternal greetings.

Reverend M. Betha declared the congress constituted and welcomed the Christian Women's League to General Synod.

Reverend Mmolawa welcomed Christian Women's Ministry at the General Synod stated that "We are guided by the Theme Victory through Christ as we stand united in the strength and grace that our Savior bestows upon us."

The highlight of the First Christian Women's League congress was the Praise and Worship that displayed unity amongst members.

The presentation by Mrs. Stella Sebati, (founder of Christian Women's League), on how the ministry was established in 1991.

The Election of the first General Synod Executive Committee, they are:

Mrs. Florence Makobonyane: President: (Southern Synod)

Mrs. Pauline Radipape: Deputy President (Northern Synod)

Ms. Florence Rampai: Secretary: (Free State and Lesotho)

Ms. Fikile Magwaza: Deputy Secretary: (Kwa-Zulu Natal)

Mrs. Kholeka Tsotsotso: Treasurer: (Southern Synod)

The Core Ministry for Congregation Ministry mandated Reverend Khanyile to be the Core Ministry Representative for Christian Women's League.

The launch of Christian Women's League on Sunday at the local stadium, where members of the ministry, and other ministries graced the occasion.

The induction of the first General Synod Christian Women's League Executive committee by the General Synod Actuaries

The dissolution of the first Christian Women's League newly elected President.

Compiled by the President (on behalf of the Executive committee).



Youth as agents of positive transformation



CEC Chairperson: Moyahabo Ramokgopa

The 8th Christian Youth Ministry General Synod Congress held from July 11 to 14, 2024, in the city of Gqeberha was abuzz with excitement and spiritual fervour as it hosted the 8th Christian Youth Ministry (CYM) General Synod Congress.

This landmark event, organized under the auspices of the Cape Synod, brought together youth leaders, ministers, and participants from various regions. Known for its dynamic sessions and transformative dialogue, the congress reaffirmed its role as a catalyst for spiritual growth and leadership development within the ministry.

A Platform for Transformation

The congress theme, "Youth as agents of positive transformation," set the tone for four days of thought-provoking discussions and collaborative decision-making. It was more than just a gathering; it was a call to action, urging young Christians to actively shape their communities and the broader ministry. The theme underscored the pivotal role of youth in driving change, emphasizing that transformation begins within and extends outward to influence society. The congress provided a unique platform for participants to engage in meaningful dialogue on the challenges and opportunities facing the youth ministry. Workshops and plenary sessions focused on equipping young leaders with the tools and knowledge necessary to lead effectively. Topics ranged from spiritual growth and community service to innovative strategies for evangelism in a rapidly changing world.

Fostering Unity and Collaboration

One of the congress's hallmarks was its emphasis on unity and collaboration. Delegates from diverse backgrounds came together, united by their shared faith and commitment to advancing the ministry. This spirit of cooperation was evident in the way discussions were conducted and resolutions were adopted. The



CEC Vice Chairperson: Lwazi Khumalo



CEC Deputy Secretary: Rae Matthys

event highlighted the power of collective effort in achieving common goals, reminding attendees that the strength of the ministry lies in its unity. The congress also served as a platform for mentorship, where seasoned leaders imparted wisdom and guidance to the next generation. This intergenerational exchange of ideas and experiences enriched the participants, fostering a culture of continuous learning and mutual support.

Impact Beyond the Congress

The deliberations at Gqeberha were not merely theoretical; they were a blueprint for action. Resolutions passed during the congress aimed to address pressing issues within the ministry and the broader community. As participants returned to their respective communities, they carried with them a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to implementing these resolutions. The impact of the congress will be felt across communities as young leaders apply what they've learned to nurture and empower their peers. By embracing their role as agents of positive transformation, these youth leaders are poised to make a lasting difference in the lives of those they serve.

A Testament to Faith and Leadership

The 8th CYM General Synod Congress in Gqeberha was more than just an event; it was a movement. It affirmed the vital role of youth in the Christian ministry and the broader society. Through its vibrant sessions and impactful deliberations, the congress inspired a generation to rise to the challenge of leadership and transformation. As the ministry moves forward, the seeds sown during this congress will undoubtedly



CEC Secretary: Pule Ramadiye



CEC Treasurer: Tsholofelo Mokoena

edly bear fruit, fostering a vibrant, engaged, and spiritually empowered youth ministry.

The following office bearers were elected to serve in the Central Executive Committee for Term 2024/2026:

CYM GS Chairperson: Bro Moyahabo Ramokgopa, Northern Synod

CYM GS Deputy Chairperson: Bro Lwazi Khumalo, KZN Synod

CYM GS Secretary: Bro Pule Ramadiye, Southern Synod

CYM GS Deputy Secretary: Sis Rae Matthys, Namibia Synod CYM GS

Treasurer: Sis Tsholofelo Mokwena, Phororo synod

Representative for GS-CMCM: Rev Tshokolo Isaac Leputla

Members of the Central Executive:

Cape Synod: Bro Jan-Pierre Manuel

KZN Synod: Bro VSS Mchunu

Free State and Lesotho synod : Sis Duduzile Mngoma

Namibia synod: Adv. Shepard Nyambe

Northern Synod: Sis Mahlatse Moloto

Phororo Synod: Sis Realeboga Matshidiso

Southern Synod: Bro Thunthu Masobe

Compiled by: CYM SMCPA Office

FREE STATE AND LESOTHO REGION

7TH CWM DAY CELEBRATION

Annually in August, the CWM RS gathers in the identified Presbytery to celebrate the CWM through remembrance of previous CWM leaders post 1994 and by also commemorating Women's Day 09 August 1956.

The first CWM celebration was held in August 2014 at the URCSA Winburg. As we continued to celebrate through the following years, we began to experience an increase in attendance. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a halting of festivities but soon as conditions stabilised, we continued to celebrate the CWM Day.

On the 10th of August 2024 we celebrated the 7th CWM Day at Thabong Multi-purpose Centre in Thabong Presbytery. The hosts are changed annually. Due to the increase of annual CWM

members, a bigger venue was elected as most churches are struggling to accommodate this growth. This year's attendance was approximately 2000. It was truly a blessed occasion.

As part of the celebration, we have a community outreach project whereby the hosting presbytery will identify the needs of the community and all the Presbyteries must donate the necessary items accordingly. The beneficiaries are invited to the celebration. CWM Constitution pg4, Objectives 6.3 states "Encourage and empower women to care for the needy."

We celebrated the 7th CWM Day also thanking God for 30 years since the URCSA's founding, it has been by His grace that CWM is still in existence. Fund raising is also part of the cele-

bration, in which all Presbyteries must participate. It was indeed a very blessed and successful event, the attendance was amazing.

The CWM RS Committee wishes to thank:

Ministers of The Word and student Ministers for their support.

The CWM Thabong Presbytery for all efforts taken to make the event a huge success.

All Presbyteries for their donations.

All CWM members who availed themselves.

Brothers and Sisters from other Ministries.

BY: CWM RS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



REMEMBERING REV DAVID PETRUS BOTHA (OOM DAWID)

David Petrus Botha

23-02-1925 tot 26-05-2024



Pappa David se gebed op 18 jarige ouderdom

" Gee my die genade om na aan u te staan
Sodat ek elke oomblik, U goue weg kan gaan
Leer my U gang van smarte
Skenk my U pand van rou
Sodat U tydensweg met my; vir my U wil ontvou"
(Uit sy boek met Memories)

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, Cape Regional Synod wishes to express our deepest condolences to the family of emeritus Rev David Petrus Botha (also respectfully known as Oom Dawid). Oom Dawid, who was 99 years old, passed away on Sunday afternoon, 26 May 2024 in Tulbagh.

As we reflect on the life and legacy of Rev David Petrus Botha we are reminded of the words by the Apostle Paul: "Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives and follow the example of their faith" (Hebrews 13:7). Rev Botha served the church in many capacities. As Moderator of the former Dutch Reformed Mission Church (Sendingkerk) he actively pursued unity, reconciliation and justice. As editor of Die Ligdraer, the official newspaper of the Sendingkerk and later also URCSA, he continued to reflect deeply on the challenges facing the church and society. As a long-serving Minister he served the congregations of Wynberg, Clanwilliam, Malmesbury, Bellville-South and Die Goeie Hoop congregation faithfully.

We are grateful to God for the life and legacy of Rev DP Botha. Reflecting on his life during his 96th birthday celebrations we are reminded how Oom Dawid together with colleagues from the Presbytery of Wynberg (in particular Rev. Izak Morkel) organized protest action against apartheid, especially after the Presbytery of Wynberg took a decision against apartheid in October 1949.

Rev Botha remained a life-long apartheid critic who at times had to endure harsh criticism for his convictions. Even so, he remained committed and steadfast in the pursuit of unity. Oom Dawid will certainly be remembered for his service and commitment to the church as he faithfully served the Lord.

To the family and friends of Rev David Petrus Botha, we pray with the Apostle Paul that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15: 13).

May his legacy continue.

Achievements of Christian Women's Ministries in 2024



The Christian Women's Ministries had an exceptional year, marked by significant milestones and a meaningful impact across congregations, presbyteries, and regions. One of the key achievements was the ministry's focus on spiritual growth through empowerment and learning. Bible studies and workshops centred around our 2023 congress theme "Reclaiming the I CAN Attitude" provided enriching learnings through experiences for the women. The sub-themes such as Victor Not a Victim, Begin Dreaming Again, Hope in a Hopeless Situation and others attracted strong participation, deepening women's faith and fostering a sense of connection within the ministry.

A highlight of the year was the successful Strategic Planning Session which was held in March, and was facilitated by General Riyah Piyega. This session brought together regional executive committees for collaborative and enriching discussions and it was instrumental in aligning goals, sharing best practices, and developing a unified strategy for future growth. Participants left motivated

and equipped with actionable plans to enhance service within congregations, presbyteries, and regions.

Community outreach and service were also significant areas of impact. The ministry expanded its engagement through initiatives such as food drives, school uniform donations, soup kitchens, and hospital visits. These activities demonstrated the ministry's commitment to its motto, "Women in Service of Christ and His Church." The women also strengthened partnerships with local shelters, providing much-needed donations, prayers, and hands-on support for vulnerable groups, including the elderly and women in crisis.

Fellowship and collaboration were celebrated throughout the year, particularly during Women's Month in August and the Christian Women's Ministries (CWM) Day. These events featured vibrant, regionally organized programs that fostered a sense of unity and spiritual renewal. Additionally, the ministry's participation in other ministry congresses created opportunities to share greetings and engage in worship, further strengthening bonds within the

broader church community and contributing to the growth of God's kingdom.

These accomplishments reflect the unwavering dedication and faith of the Christian Women's Ministries. As they celebrate this year's achievements, the ministry remains committed to inspiring and uplifting women while continuing to serve communities with compassion and a spirit of unity.

As we reflect on the remarkable achievements of the Christian Women's Ministries in 2024, we are reminded of the profound truth in Galatians 6:9: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." This verse embodies the ministry's steadfast dedication to empowering women, fostering spiritual growth, and serving communities with unwavering love and compassion. Let this scripture encourage us to persevere in faith and service, knowing that the seeds sown this year will bear fruit for God's glory in the years to come.

Mrs Vuyokazi Vinqi

GS CWM President

"May this Christmas fill your hearts with joy, your homes with peace, and your lives with renewed faith. Thank you for the dedication and love you bring to our ministry, shining as beacons of God's grace. Let us continue to pray for one another and trust in His mercy. I wish you and your families a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year."
Mrs Vuyokazi Vinqi (GSCWM President)



MODERATORS' FESTIVE MESSAGES



“In this season of giving, let us also be reminded of the call to love and serve one another, just as Christ loves us. May we continue to walk in His light, supporting one another with compassion, kindness, and grace.

As we approach the New Year, I pray that God’s blessings overflow in your lives. May He guide your steps, renew your strength, and grant you peace in the coming year. Whatever challenges we may face, let us remember that God is with us, and in Him, all things are possible.”

Rev Langa Fokase

Free State & Lesotho Regional Synod Moderator

“May the Lord help us all to see deeper this Christmas, to love courageously and to keep holding on to hope, faithfully. May we give as generously as we received and may our tables be welcoming spaces. Let us all pray together this season: Lord, let me see as you work in my life!

A Blessed Christmas and a prosperous New year to you and your family. Remember, God has been at work from generation to generation and you will not be forgotten. Amen.”

Rev Hendry Tromp

Cape Regional Synod Moderator



“This Christmas, as we remember the gift of our Saviour, we are called to be bearers of His peace, love, unity and reconciliation. We are called to reach out to those suffering, to pray for those in conflict, and to embody Christ’s love in a world that desperately needs it.

May the peace of Christ fill your heart this Christmas and may His light shine through you into a world that longs for hope. In the midst of hardship, let us hold fast to the truth. God bless!”

Rev Dr Nkosinathi Lawrence Mbatha

KZN Regional Synod Moderator

MODERATORS' FESTIVE MESSAGES



Dear member of URCSA. It is in this time we are reminded that the infant child called Jesus of Nazareth, entered the world marginalized. It is in this period where we should open our doors for the marginalized because many are still without access to financial systems, housing, service, education, labour market, etc. "For through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18)

Rev Prof Boitumelo Senokoane

Southern Synod Regional Synod Moderator



"As we celebrate the joy of Christmas and look ahead to the promise of a New Year, we are reminded of the incredible gift of Jesus Christ—God's love made flesh among us. As we step into 2025, may we continue to grow in faith and serve together in God's love, sharing His light with the world."

Rev Dr Elias Monhla
Northern Regional Synod Moderator



"May the Christmas season bring you the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the enduring peace of His love, not just for now but for always. We are hope bearers take it to our fellow brothers and sisters."

Rev Soraya Mostert-Gertze
Namibia Regional Synod Moderator

Happy new year

"Celebrating Christmas is not just an event that happened in the distant past. With Christmas we celebrate God's coming in His Son Jesus to this world and his lasting presence with us every day!

So, the good news of Christmas: He is Immanuel—God with us, also in the new Year 2025. A Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2025 to all of you!"

Rev Johan Julies
Phororo Regional Synod Moderator



EULOGY – REVEREND JAN METTLER



By Rev Prof Nico Koopman

A eulogy, in Greek, means “a good word”. There are, by God’s grace, so many good words to speak about Oom Jan, Reverend Jan Mettler.

I offer one perspective. Let us continue to share different perspectives. In this way, we can remember and honour Oom Jan.

Oom Jan was one of our greatest and most beautiful ones, a father to us. has departed. I met him in 1980 as a first-year student at the University of the Western Cape. In 1981, he visited me at the Finsch Mine in Lime Acres with a few ministers of the Presbytery of Kuruman, including the late Pat Petersen and Uncle Davie Jacobs. I remember the joyful visit, the teasing, and the inspiring fellowship.

Oom Jan gave up a synodal position as Director of Public Witness to help build congregations in the rapidly growing Mitchells Plain. When I became a minister in the fast-growing Atlantis, I joined Oom Tiny Peters and worked with him, Oom Jan, Dr. Andries Botha, Oom Cliffie Kannemeyer, and other pastors to help establish congregations. We served together in the Peninsula Council for Church Cooperation.

Oom Jan provided leadership at a broader church level:

Colleague Willie Engelbrecht from Springbok recounts how Oom Jan, decades ago, during unity discussions in Bloemfontein with the Dutch Reformed Church, lovingly confronted the DRC Moderator, Prof. Johan Heyns, about unity that seeks reconciliation and justice. He even said, “Johan, I have kicked off my shoes and now stand in my socks in this synod hall...”

I remember the evening in 1986 when the synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church had to vote on the formal adoption of the Belhar Confession. The moderator, Dr. Allan Boesak, asked Oom Jan to lead the synod in prayer. That prayer remains one of the treasures of the URCSA.

It went as follows:

“We feel like Daniel in the lion’s den, for suddenly the hour has come upon us. For this act of faith by the Mission Church, we must take full responsibility. We stand here defenceless and vulnerable, because we realize how easily we can suffer in following the man of Nazareth. With our fragile faith, we want to wait on You to show us the path we must take.”

Oom Jan was a Reformed pastor. The Reformed tradition values democracy—the vision of a life of dignity for all—and democratic, communal decision-making. I remember an article he wrote in which he argued that moderators of our church do not take decisions alone. They are chairpersons of synods. It is synods and com-

missions that jointly make decisions and lead collectively.

We honor this champion for the Belhar faith: of togetherness (Article 1), the search for reconciliation (Article 2), and compassionate justice (Article 3), in obedience to the Lord (the conclusion of Belhar), who gathers, protects, and cares for us (the introduction to Belhar).

May the Lord comfort and strengthen Auntie Josey, their children, Johann, Mariette, Ilna and their spouses, their grandchildren and the family. Oom Jan will be remembered; he will be again a member, always a member. Always in honouring verbondenheid.

May the faith of Jan Mettler live in our hearts—the faith that lets us say we shall live even though we have died; the faith that allows us only to say goodbye, for we will meet again and celebrate togetherness ... someday, someday; in the blessed heavenly home, with the Lord, with the Lord.

