

UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH GENERAL SYNOD 2016

BENONI

3-9 October 2016

6. MINUTES DAY SIX

8 OCTOBER 2016

1. Opening

Regional Synod of Namibia start the day with Devotions

2. Announcements

Moderator explains the following instructions to Synod:

- Minutes of Day One must be signed by all delegates
- A book was published based on the 30 year celebration of the Belhar Confession.: “Belhar Confession. The Embracing Confession of Faith in Church and Society”. It is an overview of the History of the BelharConfession.It is available at R400.00 per book. Delegates who are interested to buy the book can sign up for it.
- Synod will stop after Lunch and delegates are free for the rest of the afternoon.
- Delegates and Ecumenical Partners as well as congregants from the Region are invited to attend the Gala event in the evening.

3. Report of the Temporary Ministry for Pastoral Letter, Doctrinal Matters and Resolutions.

a. Resolutions pertaining to contemporary issues as raised by GS 2016.

1. The Confession of Belhar - Resolution 1 **Approved**
2. Diversity as a Gift – Resolution 2 **Approved**
3. Church Unity- Resolution 3 **Approved**
4. Ecumenical Relationships- Resolution 4 **Approved**
5. Just and Inclusive Communities- Resolution 5-7 **Approved**



With regards to the Israel-Palestine situation and the phenomena of Christian Zionism GS decided the following:

GS 2016 Decision 157

Executive Report 2016 Recommendation 10: WCC Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Peace Process.

3. Based on the principles of the Belhar Confession, unity, reconciliation and justice the General Synod of URCSA calls on all Congregations and Regional Synods
 - g) To recognize the danger of using scripture to in any way justify occupation, and to recognize Christian Zionism as a form of Christian fundamentalism endangering especially indigenous Palestinian Christian communities.
 - h) To listen to and respond to the voices of Palestinian Christians (including those expressed through the 'Kairos Palestine' document);
 - i) To promote and support all non-violent efforts to end the occupation (including considering appropriate economic and other measures);
 - j) To promote inter-faith dialogue and cooperation with Jewish and Muslim partners on the pilgrimage of justice and peace in South Africa.
 - k) The General Synod of URCSA invites congregations to join together annually the World Week for Peace in Palestine/Israel of advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel.
 - l) The General Synod of URCSA requests the Scribe Synodi of the General Synod and/or General Secretary to forward information concerning the World Week for Peace in Palestine/Israel on an annually basis to Regional Synods which on their account will ensure to furnish information to the Local Congregations.

GS 2016 Decision 158

Decision taken by GS:

3. GS decides that URCSA encourages Bible studies that unpack issues of Christian Zionism, anti-Semitism, to make sure we as Christians in URCSA are not



unknowingly or unintentionally support an ideology that resemble the nature and features of apartheid.

4. GS decides that URCSA on the basis of the Belhar Confession critically condemns any justification of Christian Zionism or religious/theological/biblically interpretations that equates the present Israel with the Old Testament Israel and preaches it.

Resolution 8 Approved

On the issue of the church addressing racism/hate speech and incitement of violence GS decided the following:

GS 2016 Decision 159

1. Executive Report 2016 Recommendation 6: **WCC: Religious leaders from Africa region on preventing incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes**
2. The General Synod of URCSA affirms based on the Belhar Confession the human dignity of all notwithstanding race, class, culture and affirms resistance to hate speech, incitement, institutional racism, state-sanctioned violence in all of its forms. **Noted**
3. The General Synod of URCSA takes note of the upsurge of racism worldwide as well as in South Africa. **Noted**
4. The General Synod of URCSA takes note of the **Blacks lives Matter movement**.
5. The General Synod of URCSA takes note of **the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders from Africa to Prevent Incitement to Violence that could lead to Atrocity Crimes. Noted**
6. The General Synod of URCSA affirms to protect and to promote universal human rights and human dignity.
7. The General Synod of URCSA affirms to prevent and counter incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence
8. The General Synod of URCSA affirms to reinforce interfaith alliances and networks and, when necessary, release joint press statements and carry out joint missions.



9. The General Synod of URCSA affirms to confront any ideology that promotes violent extremism
10. The General Synod of URCSA affirms to prevent and counter incitement to gender-based violence
11. General Synod of URCSA affirms that religious leaders and actors should work to ensure that government demonstrate respect for all religions and do not discriminate against any religion, or the practitioners of any religion.

Resolution 9 Approved

6. Access to free, decolonized and quality education Resolution 10 - **Approved**

7. Nuclear Energy Resolution 11 - **Approved**

GS 2016 Decision 160

GS decided at this meeting the following:

The GS calls on the Faith Community and Civil Community in Southern Africa to oppose the governments' nuclear program.

8. The position of URCSA regarding Homosexuality - Resolution 12 - **Approved**

B. Draft Press Release of GS 2016

- Press Release
- Belhar Confession
- Church Unity

GS 2016 Decision 161

The GS requests the General Synod of the DRC to amend Regulation 24 as well as Article 44.1 and 44.2 of the Church Order of the General Synod of the DRC in totality in order to make church reunification possible.



The GS urges the DRC to confront recalcitrant members and congregations and regional synods of the DRC with the inescapable demand of the gospel that they should strive and indefatigably work towards the goal to become members of one non-racial reunited church.

The GS declares emphatically that restorative justice should shift hence on from the periphery to the axis of bilateral and multilateral talks of the DRC Family. Justice does not pass over wrongs. Wrongs in church and society should be faced and addressed in a comprehensive manner. In doing so the DRC Family will be able to overcome past divisions and find a new and richer unity. Without attending to the issue of restorative justice church reunification

The GS approves that the **MOA** is still the basis for our relationship with the DRC

The GS approves that the joint projects of our churches: Season of Human Dignity and Churches addressing Racism continue to assist in making unity a reality.

Diversity as a Gift - **Approved**

First Deaf Ministerial Candidate with full status at Synod - **Approved**

Free, Decolonized and Quality Education - **Approved**

Nuclear Energy

GS 2016 Decision 162

This General Synod resolved:

- That the URCSA align herself with the Astana declaration
- To call on the Faith Community and Civil Community in Southern Africa to oppose the governments' nuclear program.
- To engage with the governments in the region on the issues of cleaner and affordable technology in the energy generation.

The position of the URCSA regarding Homosexuality- Approved

After discussions on this matter, General Synod decided to refer the matter regarding homosexuality back to Congregations, Presbyteries and Regional Synods for dialogue and engagement.



New Leadership Elected: 2016-2020 - **Approved**

As new leadership for the URCSA General Synod elected the following Executive Committee to serve the church till the next General Synod in 2020

1. Moderator: Prof. Rev. L J Modise
2. Assessor: Rev. M G Betha
3. Scribe: Rev. W J Julius
4. Actuary: Rev. D P Carelse
5. Additional Member: Prof. Rev. C Landman
6. Additional Member: Rev. L P Fokase
7. Additional Member: Rev. T E Ngema

GS 2016 Decision 163

GS approve with gratitude and appreciation, the report of the Temporary Ministry for Pastoral Letter, Doctrinal Matters and Resolutions.

Proposed: Rev. C J Cornelissen

Seconded: Rev. D Bock

THIRD REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY MINISTRY FOR JUDICIAL MATTERS

1. Noted

2. Noted

3. The CMM Amendments to the Constitution

- Amendment 1- **Approved**
- Amendment 2 First part on delegates be deleted. - **Approved**
- Amendment 2 In terms of Supervision the subregionis not recognized as a supervision body. - **Approved**
- Amendment 3 First part under Delegates. - **Approved**
- Amendment 4 First part under Delegates (Five, Regional Synod Executive) to be deleted. - **Approved**
- Amendment 4 Supervision is under Actuarius. - **Approved**
- Amendment 5 Delegates need credential letter. - **Approved**



- Amendment 8 Sub Region is to be deleted. - **Approved**
 - Amendment 8 the issue of “Officers responsible “is referred back to the CMM on Regional Synod level to amend their regional synod under the guidance of the Regional Synod Actuarium. The two motions received in this regard are referred back to the CMM General Synod level to refer back to the Regional Synod. To report back to the next GSC 2017 - **Approved**
 - Amendment 9 Second 9.2 change to 9.3 and 9.3 to 9.4 - **Approved**
4. Appeal against Moderamen pronouncement

GS 2016 Decision 164

Recommendations:

- 4.1 GS approves that the matter is not acceptable (ontvanklik) at the level of the General Synod based on Article 11.8 and is referred back to the Regional Synod (Northern Synod) for immediate attention. - **Approved**
- 4.2 GS approves that in terms of Regulation 2(1.1), the “pronouncements” of the Moderamen of the Regional Synod cannot be appealed at the General Synod. The appeal should be dealt with by the Synodical Commission for the Regional Synod. **Approved**
5. Letter from four Presbyteries of the Southern Synod

GS 2016 Decision 165

Recommendation: The GS refers the matter of restructuring of Synodical boundaries to the Permanent SMJM. - **Approved**

6. **Noted**
7. Executive Meeting

GS 2016 Decision 166

7.1 Recommendation: The GS confirms the recommendation of the Permanent SMJM that Mr. F W Mokoena must reapply for status. **Not approved Referred back for further investigation.**



- 7.2. Referrals to Permanent **SMJM** 1. Congregations for Chaplains. - **Approved**
2. Forfeiting of status. - **Approved**

5. REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY COMMISSION FOR FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION TO THE 7TH GENERAL SYNOD FUNDS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Cap Camp Report

GS 2016 Decision 167

Recommendation: The GS expresses its heartfelt gratitude for the generous donations received from the following institutions: **CWM** Northern Synod, **CWM** General Synod, **WCRC** Partnership Fund, The German Reformed Church and the United Protestant Church in Belgium. The Synod requests the scribe to write a letter of thanks to each of these institutions. - **Approved**

2. Budget of the Kopanong General Synod. - **Noted**
3. Income and Expenditure 2015/2016. - **Noted**
4. Investments. - **Noted**
5. Position of General Secretary and the way forward.

GS 2016 Decision 168

Recommendation: Approved

- a. GS request the Moderamen to re-advertise the position of General Secretary, interview the candidates and present the forthcoming GSC with a short list of candidates for appointment
- b. The interim arrangements are that we buy time from the scribe, to assist with the general secretary responsibilities of 35% and that of the Acting Administrator at 15%.
- c. If the interim arrangement is agreed upon, we request the Executive to negotiate with the Church Councils of both the Acting Administrator and the Scribe, on behalf of the General Synod.



- d. The appointment of the full-time Administrator should be completed on the next General Synodical Commission, the successful candidate with commence it's duties on 01 January 2018(November and December 2017, it will be the induction of the newly appointed General Secretary).

GS 2016 Decision 169 - Approved

GS decides to inform the previously interviewed candidates about the new development concerning the General Secretary position and urge them to re-apply for the vacancy when advertised.

Proposed: Elder Andre Diergaardt

Seconded: Rev. E M Matundu

6. Budget General Secretary Position **Approved**

7. Motions on the Pension Fund

1. The General Synod has noted with appreciation the report of the Belhar Pension Fund. It has however expressed its concern over disparity of employer contribution levels between the Belhar Pension Fund (10.55% of salary) and the URCSA/DRCA fund (15% of Salary). General Synod requests the Board of Trustees of the Belhar Pension Fund to urgently consider, over a period of 3 years, the phasing in of increases in the employer contribution level to bring parity between the two funds.
2. Support Ministry of Administration and Finances, must call a meeting of members from the Regional Synods, with Sanlam Umbrella Fund. The representatives then call a meeting with Members and Employees in respective regions.
3. Permanent Support Ministry of Finance and Administration, should monitor point 1 and 2 above.

8. Honoraria

Recommendation: **Approved**

1. Outgoing Moderator – R5000.00



2. Three Support Staff – (R3000 X 3) = R9000.00
3. Three Media Volunteers – (R2000 X 3) = R6000.00

GS 2016 Decision 170

Recommendation:

We propose that the honorarium be increased fourfold to the outgoing members of the Moderamen and the Support Staff if the funds allow it.

Proposed: Sydney Maesua

Seconded: Rev. S Mpembe

GS 2016 Decision 171

GS decides to give Elton John (the person who help with the microphone during sessions) an honorarium of R1000.00 as an usher with regards to the sound.

Proposed: Rev. Dr. J W Beukes

Seconded: Rev. J A Strauss

GS 2016 Decision 172

GS Mandates the Permanent Commission for Financial Administration to develop the staff conditions and job descriptions and avail them to the next GSC for approval prior any assumption of duty by any staff member

Proposed: R W Segooa

Seconded: Rev. Pieter Grove

GS 2016 Decision 173

GS accept the report of the Temporary Commission for Finances with gratitude.

Proposed: Rev. T E Ngema

Seconded: Rev. M T Masuku



6. REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY COMMITTEE FOR MEMORIAM TO THE GENERAL SYNOD

According to the information received, the following ministers and delegates to the previous synod died in the recess.

Cape Regional Synod:

Ministers of the Word:

Rev. Nathaniel Witbooi

Prof. Russel Botman

Kwazulu-Natal Regional Synod:

None

Namibia Regional Synod:

Ministers of the Word:

Rev. Dr. Hendrik Gert Platt

Church council members delegated to the last Synod:

Samuel Cloete

Northern Regional Synod:

Ministers of the Word

Rev. C J Mogashoa, Lethlabile

Emeritus Rev. C M Madiga, Turfloop

Mme. Mmamoruti Kutu, Zeerust

Mme. Mmamoruti Mabotja, Polokwane

Rev. M M Mashamba, Soekmekaar

Mme. Mma Ev. Malebana, Tshwane

Mrs. Girl Motaung (nee Kgwele- Synod music commission member), Hammanskraal

Br. Caswell Mphalele (student minister @ NTS), Lerato

Emeritus Rev. S S Nkosi, Middleburg/Mhluzi

Emeritus Ev. M Jameson Mokoena, White River

Emeritus Ev. Mogwe, Lebone

Eld. Samuel Pheeha (long serving elder 1978-2013 @Hlatjane), Hlatjane

Emeritus Rev. N S Mnisi, Malelane

Rev. M W Lebea, Malamulele

Eld "Oom Eddie" Manyakale, Maelodi D/S office staff



Sr. Margret Khumalo, Mamelodi D/S office staff - Head chief
MmeMmamoruti C M Madiga, Turfloop
Emeritus Rev. L W Tladi, Garankuwa West
Emeritus Rev. Seth Manana, Embhuleni
Emeritus Rev. J C “Koos” Beukes- Organisation Secretary Evangelisasie, Evangelism
Ministry
Emeritus Ev. Setwaba, Turfloop
Eld. J L Ntuli, Witbank
Ev. Sibanda, Mamelodi North
Emeritus Rev. PhalaHlatjane
Prof. Ellen Smith, MelodiYa Tshwane
Eld. S Adonis - Presbytery scribe, Middleburg- Nazareth
Eld. Brig Mashego, Mamelodi East
MmeMwamoruti Vincent Magagane, Elandsrivier
Emeritus Rev. Nyathela, Tshilidzini
Mrs. Rev. Modiboa, Mabopane
Emeritus Rev. Gideon Schnetler, Kranspoort
Emeritus Rev. M H Moraka, Mabodisa
Emeritus Ev. S Morebame, Nthume
Emeritus Ev. A M R Lerumo, Kranspoort

Orange Free State and Lesotho Regional Synod:

Ministers of the word:

Rev. Matabola
Rev. Moletsane
Rev. Ramolula
Rev. Ntsasa

Church Council members delegated to last General Synod:

Mrs. Matabola
Mrs. Nyongoane
Mrs. Sesing
Mrs. Mphulanyane
Mrs. Lebakeng



Phororo Regional Synod:

Ministers of the Word

Rev. J J van Shalkwyk

Rev. P J van Shalkwyk

Rev. M H Motlou

Southern Regional Synod:

Ministers of the Word

Rev. Es. Mmolawa (retired) - Meadowlands Suid

Rev. Tladi - Sebokeng

Rev. S. Nyongwane - Lichtenburg Wes

Rev. C.T Kodibona

Rev. Maphanga - Tembisa West

Rev. Tumahole

Rev. Prof. G. Lubbe

Rev. J. Ramaifo (retired) - Daveyton

Rev. Molebeledi (retired) - Ikageng

Rev. S Teleko (retired) - Orkney

Rev. Mosia - Sharpeville

Rev. R. Matebula - Boschpoort

Rev. Abenigo Molefe - Magaliegburg

GS 2016 Decision 174

General Synod accepts the report of the Temporary Commission for In Memoriam

Proposed: Doris Monica Neewat

Seconded: Gladys E M Ngenya

7. Minutes of Day Four

Synod approve the minutes for Day Four with the necessary changes.

8. Report of the Temporary Commission for Election

1 Election of the Executive

a. Election of the Moderator



Rev. Dr. L J Modise was duly elected in the position as moderator with 98 votes. He is from the Southern Synod. - **Approved**

b. Election of Assessor

Rev. M G Betha was duly elected as the Assessor with 91 votes. He is from the Synod of Phororo. - **Approved**

c. Election of the Scribe

Rev. W J Julius was duly elected as the scribe with 92 votes. He is from the Synod of Namibia. - **Approved**

d. Election of the Actuarium

Rev. D P Carelse was duly elected as Actuarium with 118 votes. He is from the Synod of the Cape. - **Approved**

2. Election of the Additional Members of the Executive

a. Prof. C Landman was elected with 80 votes. She represent the Northern Synod **Approved**

b. Rev L P Fokase was elected with 99 votes. He represents the Regional Synod of Free State and Lesotho. - **Approved**

c. Rev. T E Ngema was elected with 112 votes. He represents the Synod of Kwazulu-Natal. - **Approved**

9. Report of the Extended Task Team for Homosexuality

1. **Noted**

2. **Noted**

3. **Noted**

4. Recommendation. GS Approves that there will be an open ballot voting for one of the following positions:

1. Process position by the Task Team (p210)

2. The original recommendations of the 2008 report (p209)

3. The same as position 2 with the addendum that the Ministers of the Word with their Rongregations can choose their own position.

4 The traditional position as presented in the Task Team report as Position 2: acceptance and ordination within celibacy.



Rev. Dawid Mouton tabled the following motion:

In light of the decision taken by GS 2016 on the matter of homosexuality, GS notes that we have just abandoned our moral high ground on the Confession of Belhar:

Proposed: Rev. D P Mouton

Seconded: Rev. L L Prins

Long deliberations follow regarding the procedure to follow. The moderator recognised speakers of opposing views alternately. The moderator called for a vote when it appeared that the discussion is winding up. The moderator stated what the motion is before proceeding to the vote namely that delegates have to vote for one of the five motions seeing that the motions could not be consolidated to one main motion by the Temporary Homosexuality Task Team and that they agreed upon the version as tabled. She stated in order to pass the motion on the issue of homosexuality a simple majority is required on one of the motions. She asked if the house is ready to vote and tabled the motion as follows:

- i. Process position by the Task Team (p 210)
- ii. The original recommendation of the 2008 report (p 209)
- iii. The same as position 2 with the addendum that the ministers of the Word with their congregations can choose from their own position
- iv. The traditional position as presented by the task team report as Position 2: acceptance and ordination within celibacy.
- v. In light of the decision taken by GS 2016 on the matter of homosexuality, GS note that we have just abandoned our moral high ground on the Confession of Belhar

The synod voted in favour of motion 1: 87 cast a deliberative vote and 48 voted against motion 1

GS 2016 Decision 175

1. The GS takes note of position 1
2. The GS takes note of position 2
3. The GS accepts position 3
 - a. General Synod approves a process position in which we continue dialogue within URCSA with all relevant Stakeholders (Congregations, Presbyteries, Regional Synods, Theological



Training Centres, homosexual members etc.) with the two different positions as basis for the dialogue with feedback to the next General Synodical Commissions and a final report to the next General Synod.

b. General Synod mandates the Task team on Homosexuality to facilitate this dialogue in consultation with the Regional Synods.

c. General Synod commits itself to fund the Task team on Homosexuality and or to seek funding from partner churches for these consultations in collaboration with the GS Moderamen.

4. The GS re-affirms its decisions of 2005, 2008 and 2012 as our current policy.

The moderator gave opportunity to the delegates to submit their names as well as their objections to be recorded in the minority in the minutes.

Delegates whose names are submitted to be recorded as part of the Minority vote

Sr. Doris Monica Neewat

Rev. Z E Mokgoebo

Dr. Eugene Andre Fortein

Rev. L L Prince

Rev. D P Mouton

Br. Sydney

Rev. Brain Handel

Rev. B P Makoko

Br. Plaatjie D Jacobs

Sr. Theresa

Rev. Thaiwe

Rev. D C Bock

Rev. D S Willemse

Dr. Masoeko

Rev. D P Carelse

Rev. Clive D Jacobs

Dr. D Kuyler

Rev. Valentine



Rev. Adriaan Du Plessis
Br. Nicklaas Snyders
Rev. J Julies
Elder T K Heydenrycht
Rev. Fabian C Kotze
Rev. J W Jacobs
Elder Bernard S Engel
Rev. M D Selekisho
Rev. O E Dishwene
Rev. Deon Scharneck
Rev. Bonganjalo Mbenenge
Rev. T Lephakga
Rev. B B Senokoane
Rev. E M Menhla
Sr. M Sewedi
Rev. C J Cornelissen
Br. David Tholwana
P Segele

The moderator requested all whom indicated that they want their names to be recorded in the minority in the minutes to double-check with the scribe during the break if their names had been recorded correctly.

GS 2016 Decision 176

GS accepts and approves the recommendations of the fourth report of the temporary Ministry for Judicial Matters

GS 2016 Decision 177

The GS accepts the report of the Task Team for Homosexuality

Proposed: Rev. B M Ngqozela

Seconded: Rev. Elbie Vinqi



FOURTH REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY MINISTRY FOR JUDICIAL MATTERS

- 5 Opening: **Noted**
- 6 Constituting: **Noted**
- 7 Additional members of the Presbytery of Wits (Southern Synod). **Noted**
- 8 Rev. Fokase opens with prayer. **Noted**
- 9 History of case by the General Synod Actuarium: Rev. FW Mokoena
 - Rev. F W Mokoena took demission from Schoonspruit without informing the Regional Synod or the **SMJM** to take a “secular” job; 2010 Achterberg confirmed his forfeiture of status.
 - Mr. Mokoena applied for reinstatement as minister of the Word on 8 June 2011 through the URCSA Tembisa – Church Council of Tembisa recommended his reinstatement on 27 June 2011, supported by the Presbytery of Johannesburg 16 October 2012 (more than a year later)
 - When the Actuarium presented the application to the SMJM (GS) 2013, the SMJM (GS) was told that Br. Mokoena was already inducted in URCSA Diepkloof December 2012. Southern Synod was asked to investigate.
 - **Note:** 8 November 2011 correspondence with Rev. Betha with advice on procedure to be followed to be reinstated.
 - **Note:** Correspondence from Prof. Modise to Br. F W Mokoena asking whether he could respond as Actuarium of the Southern Synod or the General Synod. No answer yet.
 - GS 2014 listed him as having forfeited his status.
 - Br. Mokoena appealed to GS- discussed by SMJM (GS) because it was sent to the SMJM to ask for advice. A letter was sent to him by the chairperson, Rev. D P Carelse, 12 July 2016, informing him how to apply for reinstatement.



Recommendation

- 1 The GS accepts the **SMJM** (GS)'s finding that Brother FW Mokoena was aware that he has lost his status, and that he knew it through the correspondence of the SMJM(GS). **Approved**
- 2 The GS confirms the decision of the Third Report of the Temporary SMJM (GS) that Brother FW Mokoena must apply for reinstatement. **Approved**

GS 2016 Decision 178

GS accepts and approves the recommendation of the Fourth Report of the Temporary Ministry for Judicial Matters

Proposed: Rev. Mbenenge

Seconded: Rev. D Scharneck

REPORT OF PERMANENT MINISTRIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD 2016

1. Presentation of the ministries according to the **IM** model

The following delegates to serve in ministry during the recess are presented to the meeting for approval.

ORDER COMMISSION		
Regional Synod	PRIMARUS	SECUNDUS
Moderator	Rev. Prof Leepo Modise	
Assessor	Rev. M G Betha	
Scribe	Rev. W Julius	
Actuarius	Rev. D P Carelse	
Northern	Rev. Prof. C Landman	
Kwazulu-Natal	Rev. T E Ngema	
Freestate and Lesotho	Rev. I Khambule	
Additional member	Rev. K S Mabelane	
Additional member	Rev. P Grove	
Additional member	Elder Kolobe	
Executive	Elder K. Giba	



CORE MINISTRY FOR PROCLAMATION AND WORSHIP		
Regional Synod	PRIMARUS	SECUNDUS
Cape	REV. P GROVE	REV. J. BEUKES
Freestate and Lesotho	EM. MAKGASANE	REV. MG MOHOJE
Kwazulu-Natal	REV. S T ZUMA	ELDER SAMUEL MASUKU
Northern	REV. M T XABA	REV. MAPHIKE
Namibia	REV. D P MOUTON	ELDER FLORIDA BEUKES
Phororo	REV. B P MAKOKO	REV. DS WILLEMSE
Southern	REV. D R LEPHAKGA	REV. D R MASUKU
Expert		
Executive	Rev. T E Ngema	

CORE MINISTRY FOR CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY		
Regional Synod	PRIMARUS	SECUNDUS
Cape	REV. B NGQOZELA	ELDER T HEYDENRYCHT
Free state and Lesotho	ELDER. T MOTAUNG	REV. M P MOAHLODI
Kwazulu-Natal	REV. P KHANYILE	MS. N MYENI
Namibia	REV. MATUNDU MATUNDU	ELDER E. J HEPUNDJUA
Northern	REV. M J MOLAWA	REV.C MOKHELE
Phororo	REV. S M TERHART	BR. O M MOKGWEETSI
Southern	MRS. F MAKOBONYANE	REV. A FOBA
Expert		
Executive	Rev. M G Betha	
Reps of Ministries		



CORE MINISTRY FOR SERVICE AND WITNESS		
Regional Synod	PRIMARUS	SECUNDUS
Cape	REV. M MANASSE	REV. L TITIMANI
Free state and Lesotho	REV. M D SELEKISHO	ELDER NA MAKHOSANE
Kwazulu-Natal	S J MAJOLA	MS.N. BHENGU
Namibia	REV. J J NEL	ELDER. ISABELLA NONGAVA
Northern	REV. P P MOLEHE	REV. S S MOKOENA
Phororo	REV. E R JULIUS	REV.C J CORNELISSEN
Southern	REV.J TAIWE	REV. M SHAI
Expert		
Executive	Rev. Prof. L J Modise	Rev L Fokase
Reps of Ministries		

SUPPORT MINISTRY FOR SMFA		
Regional Synod	PRIMARUS	SECUNDUS
Cape	REV. B MBENENGE	REV. P BOCK (ADMINISTRATOR)
Free state and Lesotho	REV. L I TABI	REV. M I KHAMBULE
Kwazulu-Natal	REV. T E NGEMA	REV. S T ZUMA
Namibia	ELDER J BLOM	ELDER. ANDRE DIERGAARDT
Northern	REV. M MOIMA	DEACON S. MAZSELA
Phororo	REV. D S WILLEMSE	BR. R A SIMON
Southern	ELDER. M SEWEDI	B B SENOKOANE
Expert		
Executive	Rev W J Julius	
All Regional Synod administrators are part of this Ministry		
Reps of Ministries (All treasurers of Ministries).		



SUPPORT MINISTRY FOR SMCPA		
Regional Synod	PRIMARUS	SECUNDUS
Cape	REV. VINQI	REV. B HANDEL
Free state and Lesotho	REV. BCT MOCHEKOANE	ELDER. CS KOLOBE
Kwazulu-Natal	REV. P V ZULU	M. NXUMALO
Namibia	REV.W JULIUS	REV. M HAMUKUAJA
Northern	DR.W M MOIME	ELD. O E MOKOTEDI
Phororo	REV. J JULIES	BR. N SNYDERS
Southern	REV. K S MABELANE	Rev Mpembe
Expert	MR. KATLEHIO MOKOENA	MRS. KEFOLOE FOKASE
Executive	Rev. Prof. C Landman	
Reps of Ministries		

CORE MINISTRY FOR SMJM		
Regional Synod	PRIMARUS	SECUNDUS
Cape	REV. D P CARELSE	
Free state and Lesotho	REV. L P FOKASE	REV. B C T MOCHEKOANE
Kwazulu-Natal	REV. B T SITHOLE	REV. I NGEMA
Namibia	REV. A A DU PLESSIS	
Northern	PROF. C LANDMAN	REV. J RAKOMA
Phororo	REV. C J CORNELISSEN	
Southern	REV. L J KEKANA	
Elder (Female)	SR. A WILLEMSE	
Elder (Male)	Br. C LOLWANE	
Expert		
Executive	Rev. D P Carelse	



GS 2016 Decision 179

GS approves the ministries.

Speech of outgoing moderator to newly elected Executive of URCSA 10 October 2016

I, Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel, as outgoing moderator of URCSA will now introduce the newly elected executive to the podium. According to GS Regulation on procedure of meetings: *The newly elected executive assume their responsibilities at the end of the meeting.* The time to introduce the newly elected executive is therefore now. It had been a pleasure to work with the outgoing executive of the GS of the URCSA. Some of them with whom I worked approximately 16 years on General Synodical level for example the Reverend Betha, and I started served as actuarius representing our respective Regional Synods on the **SMJM** of the GS in 2002 and later we served as Assessor and I as Moderator on the GS. Br Betha is indeed an Israelite in whom there is no deceit (1 John 4:47) Thanks Br. Betha for your friendship. Prof Leepo Modise, somebody who stand firm in his believes. Thanks for your unwavering support to me during the recess. Thanks be to Reverend Collin Goeiman for his loyalty and Rev. Dr. Dawid Kuyler, you worked as scribe during the recess with all your heart, as if working for the Lord, and thanks be to God for your work ethic. (Colossians 2:23-24). I hereby want to express my heartfelt gratitude for friendship, your high level of commitment to execute the decisions of the GS, deep theological reflections on social justice issues in church and society and church reunification, team work in drafting reports and developing the Strategic plan and in our unified front in our deliberations with the DRC on church reunification. I exit these Synodical Chambers and the GS structures a much richer person than I entered 16 years ago. You were more than willing to be pour out as a drinking offer in the service of our Lord in serving His church, knowing that your reward is in heaven (Phil 2:17). May the good Lord bless you.

As outgoing moderator I want to thank GS for the trust you conveyed in 2012 GS in Okahandja for electing me as first female moderator of URCSA. Three things will I always cherish which I would not been able to achieve without your entrusting leadership of URCSA to me

- a. I as moderator of URCSA had been bestowed the honour to conduct the evening prayers at the house of the late president Nelson Mandela in order to minister to the bereaved Mandela family in 2013 in his house in Houghton and me and My



- husband could also on behalf of URCSA attended his funeral in Qunu. Without being the moderator of URCSA this honour would never be bestowed on me
- b. I had the opportunity as spoke person of URCSA to draft numerous press statements during the recess. The one on Xenophobia and aphrophia had been published in German booklet on the Belhar Confession during 2016.
 - c. Lastly I had been elected as president of the WCC (2013-2020) on my first ever meeting to represent URCSA at the General Assembly of the WCC in Busan 2013.

May you as newly elected moderator always keep in mind that the Synod/GSC/ church reunification talks is *neither a convention, nor a parlor, nor a parliament or senate, where people make deals and reach compromises. The Synod/GSC is rather an Ecclesial expression. The Synod/GSC is a protected space in which the Church experiences the action of the Holy Spirit* (Pope Francis), it should be never about us. I hereby call to the fore the following as the newly elected executive of URCSA. May Jesus the one and only Head of the church grant you wisdom, humility, to walk with God, to embody our confessional basis (especially the Belhar Confession) and to speak truth to power. My Scripture reading to you for your tenure as executive of URCSA is *May God increase and you decrease* (John 3:30). Moderator of General Synod: Prof. Leepo Modise, Assessor: Motlawentla Godfrey Betha, Scribe: William Julius. Actuarium: Davis Peter Carelse, Additional members: Reverend Fokase, Reverend Thamsanqa Eddy Ngema and Prof. Christina Landman, **Blessing to you all.**

GS 2016 Decision 180

GS accept the address of the outgoing moderator with appreciation.

Proposed: Rev. O E Ditshwena

Seconded: Elder AM Segone



THE MESSAGE OF THE NEWLY ELECTED MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

I would like to thank God for the strength and wisdom he has given to me to guide and provide advices to his Church for the past four years as the General Synod Actuarium. I would to thank every would God has used to recognise his calling to me, to serve his calling at this level, I avail myself as a humble servant of the Lord to facilitated the implementation of the 12 articles of the church order and the strategic plan that this synod has approved. The road to unity, reconciliation and justice in obedience to God is levelled. My strengthen and secret is in Scriptures, confessions, tradition and the Church Order, with these in my hands I will facilitated the edification is this church.

If we are really serious about the theme of this synod as the vision for the future one need to take the five “Rs” into consideration, the following are very important:

- Facing reality: this is the first step on the road to freedom, and is where the cost of restoration begins.
- Accepting responsibility: while facing reality acknowledges the truth of a situation, accepting responsibility goes a step further in recognising that a personal response is required.
- Expressing repentance: accepting personal responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions leads to an expression of repentance. This constitutes sorrow and sincere regret for the actions – a realisation that the actions were wrongful and should not have occurred. The usual way in which this is done is by making an apology to the person who has been wronged, and by asking forgiveness from the supernatural being that the offender relates to.
- Knowing reconciliation: being willing to face the full force of wrongfulness, and refusing to take refuge in excuses or rationalizations make it possible to know reconciliation with the person who has been wronged. While there is no guarantee that the person who has been wronged will be willing or able to offer reconciliation, full reconciliation is not possible if the wrongfulness has not been faced.
- Making restitution: this is a practical way of facing the consequences of behaviour. It is a way of demonstrating the credibility of the words that were expressed when making an apology and of expressing thankfulness for reconciliation.

I will do everything in God who give me strengthen.



Permanent Commission members of the core Ministries for General Synod 2016-2020

A. Permanent Commission Members of the Core Ministry for Service and Witness (CMSW):

Initials & Surname	Synod	Cell number	Email Address
Rev. D J Taiwe - Chairperson	Southern Synod	0719076527	diphokotaiwe@gmail.com
Rev. P P Molehe - Vice Chairperson	Northern Synod	0739389259/ 0827919414	moleheseun@yahoo.com
Rev. M P Manasse - Secretary	Cape Synod	0722274242/ 0419921364	mpm@vodamail.co.za
Rev. S J Majola - Additional member	KZN Synod	0824768533	sjmajola@webmail.co.za
Rev. J J Nel - Additional member	Namibia Synod	09264812689956	jjnel@iway.na
Rev. M D Selekisho - Additional member	FS& Lesotho Synod	0788105532	mselekisho@gmail.com
Rev. E R Julius	Phororo Synod	0781217862/ 0767818566	ccjsutherland@gmail.com
Rev. Prof. L J Modise Expert & Executive Rep	General Synod Moderator	0829494164	modislj@unisa.ac.za

B. Permanent Commission Members of the Ministry for Proclamation and Witness (CMPW)

Initials & Surname	Synod	Cell number	Email Address
Rev. P Grove Chairperson	Cape Synod	0768983214	Pjgrove1@gmail.com
Rev. Lephakga - Scribe	Southern Synod	0815069803	lephat@unisa.ac.za
Rev. T Ngema	General Synod	0834748968	ngema@worldonline.co.za
Rev. E Makgasane	Freestate and LestothoSyno	0834770335	Magash.zo.za@gmail.com
Rev. S Zuma	KZN Synod	071043459	samueltzuma@gmail.com
Rev. D Mouton	Namibia Synod	002648159100 53	Moutonpo63@gmail.com
Rev. M Xaba	Northern Synod	0724266304	xabatim@gmail.com
Rev. B Makoko	Phororo Synod	0723344698	Basimane.makoko@vodamail.co.za



C. Permanent Commission Members of the Core Ministry for Congregational Ministry (CMCM):

Initials & Surname	Synod	Cell number	Email Address
Rev. MJ Molawa - Chairperson		083 288 2853	molawajacky@gmail.com
F Mokobonyane Vice Chairperson		083 747 4002	fmakobonyane@gmail.com
Rev. M.G Betha		082 741 5843	mgbetha@live.co.za
Dr. MC Teu - Scribe		079 515 6269	matlhoditeu@gmail.com
Rev. BM Ngqozela - vice Scribe		83 558 1984	bngqozela@gmail.com
Thabo Motaung		083 337 8722	motaungt7@gmail.com / thabo.motaung@sasol.com
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Rev. P Khanyile		079 636 6026	Peter.khanyile@gmail.com
Kagiso Tladi		082 200 5290	kagi@mktladi.co.za
Nkosana Mabuza		071 012 2379	Nkosana.Mabuza@transnet.net

D. Permanent Commission Members of the Support Ministry for Finance and Administration:

Initials & Surname	Synod	Cell number	Email Address
Rev. Mioma - Chairperson	Northern Synod		
El. Sewedi - Secretary	Southern Synod		
Rev. Mbenenge - Add member	Cape Synod		
Rev. L I Tabi Add member	Freestate & Lesotho		
Rev. T E Ngemena Add member	KZN Synod		
El. Andre Diergaardt Add member	Namibia Synod		
Br. R A Simon Add member	Phororo Synod		
Rev. Elias Monhla Expert			
Rev. W J Julius Executive Rep	Namibia	002648141683 88	vgknarraville@aol.com
All Regional Synod Administrators. Reps of Ministries (Treasurers of CYM, CWM, CMM, Youth Brigade)			

General Synod adjourns at 5:15 pm



UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH GENERAL SYNOD 2016

BENONI

3-9 October 2016

7. MINUTES DAY SEVEN

9 OCTOBER 2016

The Seventh General Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa came to a close with a Holy Communion Service. Prof Klippiess Kritzinger acted as liturgist and Prof. Dirkie Smit as preacher. Prof. Kritzinger, Emeritus Minister from Northern Synod served the Holy Communion.

WORSHIP SERVICE, URCSA GENERAL SYNOD

SUNDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2016

Votum

We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who through Word and Spirit gathers, protects and cares for the church from the beginning of the world and will do to the end.

Merciful and eternal God, as you gather us together by your Spirit, feed us through Word and sacrament, protect us from evil and falsehood, and bind us together in joy and justice, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Greeting

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Amen.



Hymn (Hosanna 20)

Re a o boka, Morena,
Re ntse re thabela wena;
Re sa phela hamonate
Ka paballo ya hao, Ntate.

Sisindisiwe ngomusa,
Ngeziphiwo zonke zakho,
Lukhulu uzwelo lwakho,
Luyasethabisa njalo.

Usenze amalungisa
Abrahama ngokomthetho.
Sibulela kuwe, Bawo,
Wena osiphe umondle.

O re nec ho thabela
Tsee o di ratang kaofela;
Thato ya hao e phethehe,
Bana ba hao ba kgethehe.

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

Introduction of preacher: Professor D J Smit (University of Stellenbosch)

U het die brood gebreek eens by die meer.
Breek nou die lewensbrood vir ons ook,
Heer.
Usel, die hemelbrood, daal na ons neer -
U is die manna-brood wat ons begeer!

Ndondle kwanam, Nkosi, ngeso sonka,
njengoko wasaba eGalili.
Manditye ndanele, Sonka sobom';
Ndibek' ithemba lam kuwe, Nkosi.

Roma Moya, Jesu, ho tla nthuta!
Ama mahlo a ka, ke o bone!
Mphe nnete le jwale! Le ka ho nna
ke tle ke o bohe, Morena ka!

You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
Your holy Word the truth that sets me free:
Sweet honey in my mouth, light for my
path,
Lead us into the truth, renew our heart!



Scripture readings: Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery;
you shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself an idol ...
You shall not bow down to them or worship them ...
You shall not make wrongful use of
the name of the Lord your God ...
Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy ...
Honour your father and your mother ...
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
You shall not covet your neighbour's house;
you shall not covet your neighbour's wife,
or slave, or ox, or donkey,
or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Matthew 22:34-40

The Pharisees ... gathered together,
and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him:
“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”
Jesus said to him: “You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
This is the greatest and first commandment.
And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”
On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.



1 Peter 3:15-16

If you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed ...
Do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord.
Always be ready to make your defence to anyone
who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you;
yet do it with gentleness and reverence.
Keep your conscience clear,
so that, when you are maligned,
those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ
may be put to shame.

SERMON by Prof Dirkie Smit

UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (URCSA)
GENERAL SYNOD, KOPANONG, BENONI, 9 OCTOBER 2016
COMMEMORATING BELHAR THIRTY YEARS AFTER ITS OFFICIAL ADOPTION

“Always give account of the hope that is in you”

1 Pet 3:15

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol ... You shall not bow down to them or worship them ... You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God ... Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy ... Honor your father and your mother ... You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour (Ex 20:1-17).

The Pharisees ... gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus said to him "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your



mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt 22:34-40).

(If you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed ... Do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame (1 Pet 3:15-16).

Always give account of the hope that is in you

In 1 Pet 3:15 Peter urges the church always to be ready to give account of the hope within them. He is writing to believers who find life difficult. Their societies were calling them names, treating them unjustly, making their everyday life hard. He addresses them as aliens and exiles, because that is how they must have felt – unwelcome in their own communities, homeless, forced to the margins, outsiders.

Peter urges them not to lose hope. He reminds them of who they really are – the baptised people of God, how precious they are in God's sight, how much they have received in Jesus Christ. He reminds them of their own dignity, wonderful calling, new identity, new belonging, their hope.

Peter urges them to have a positive witness. When they feel resistance, suffer criticism, meet opposition – they should give account of this hope within them. When others ask them why they are so different, why they refuse to go along with the lifestyle and practices of their communities, why they are saying no to many things – then they should explain that they say no because they say yes, it comes from the hope within them, from God's yes to them.

They should do this modestly, he says, respectful, but with conviction. People should never have reason to criticise them for doing what is wrong. If they suffer opposition it should be for the good that they do and speak and for the positive hope within them. Christ also suffered like that.

Always give account of the hope that is in you

Over many years different Synods of our church thought that they were doing exactly this, when they gave account of the hope within them in the words of the *Confession of Belhar*.

When *Belhar* was drafted, during really dark and difficult days, born as a cry from the heart; when *Belhar* was discussed in all Regions and Congregations and in public, for everyone to



hear who we are; when *Belhar* was officially adopted with so much gratitude and joy – thirty years ago; when *Belhar* became the basis of our new church order; when *Belhar* became our witness, further in Africa, into Europe, into the Americas, into the Middle East, into Asia, this is what our church always thought that it was doing.

We were saying yes, this is what we believe, yes, this is who we are and who we want to be, yes, this is our dream, our longing, our desire for our broken world, yes, this is the hope that we have received in Jesus Christ. We were giving account of the yes behind our own no's.

We confessed that we said no to the darkness of our times and resisted the dark forces of our times. We made clear what we rejected and which convictions we did not believe and which values we did not share and which practices we would not follow and whose laws we would not obey and whose powers we would not fear and whose authority we would not serve – but all these no's were born from a deeper yes within us. We desired unity, we longed for reconciliation, we dreamt of justice, we were inspired by such promises, we imagined such hope.

We say yes to unity – and therefore often have to say no to whoever rejects and despises unity, whoever can live with exclusion and division and conflict and separation. We say yes to reconciliation – and therefore often have to say no, even to the bitterness in our own hearts, to memories filled with anger, to feelings of revenge, to ongoing experiences of disappointment. We say yes to compassion and justice – and therefore often say no to every form of injustice and inequality and abuse and neglect and apathy to those who suffer.

Always give account of the hope that is in you

We stand in long traditions where our mothers and fathers did precisely the same. When the *Belgic Confession* was adopted, hundreds of years ago, they did that in the name of 1 Pet 3:15 – because this is what they thought they were doing.

When the *Belhar Confession* was adopted in our own Synods these words of 1 Pet 3:15 were quoted again and again – because this is what they were convinced they were doing.

When many other churches and believers in our world make *Belhar* their own, when many sisters and brothers join in and make this yes their own yes, this is also what they think they are doing. Inspired by our hope and sharing our yes they are all saying no to the different forms of darkness of their times and places, in many parts of our common world today.

Always give account of the hope that is in you



In the 1930s Christians in Germany adopted a document like a confession, called *The Theological Declaration of Barmen*. Barmen, like Belhar, is the name of the suburb where they met.

Barmen was their no to the darkness of their times, the times of growing Nazism and excluding believers with Jewish background from the church. This declaration said no!, loudly and clearly and with passion.

The pastor Karl Barth helped in writing this document. Years later, looking back, he explained how their radical no was born from their deep-felt yes. It was the yes of God's love for the world, for human beings, for everyone in need, everyone who suffers from the darkness of life.

He called it the humanity of God. In Jesus, he said, we hear and we see God's love for humanity, we see God's humanity, we hear God's yes to humanity. Once this yes of God has become the yes of our own heart, he said, we cannot help but say no to many forms of darkness around us.

In the name of God's yes, we say no whenever we see people saying no to others – excluding them, humiliating them, forgetting them, abusing them, violating them.

Always give account of the hope that is in you

When Allan Boesak wrote his doctoral dissertation as a young pastor of our church, he called it *Farewell to Innocence*.

He was referring to the innocence of those who never say no, the innocence of looking away, of pretending not to see the suffering, not to notice the need. He was speaking of the innocence of turning a deaf ear in order not to hear the cries, convincing ourselves that we do not understand the causes, the history behind the pain, the injustice behind the inequalities.

His farewell to innocence was a farewell to silence and a call to witness, speak out, confess, and give account of the hope within us, for all to hear.

In the front of his book Allan Boesak chose as motto words from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a martyr from the time of the Confessing Church of Barmen. In this quote, Bonhoeffer explains how every no flows from a yes. It is our hope that makes us resist, whenever necessary. It is our hope, our yes based on God's own yes, which moves us and inspires us again and again.

Always give account of the hope that is in you



We stand in long traditions that already knew this. John Calvin at the beginnings of our own tradition, already knew this.

He made this clear when he explained the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments may sound to us as if God is saying no. No, you may not do this and no, you should not do that. But if the no is all that we hear in the commandments, said Calvin, then we have not really heard. Then we have not yet understood what God is truly saying. Then we have still missed the whole point, which lies in God's yes, hidden within all these no's, he says.

When God says that we should not kill God's real intention is that we should do everything within our power to promote the life of others, to defend their safety, to ward off any harm to them, to resist and help remove any danger to them, he says.

When God says that we should not steal God's real intention is that we should do everything we can to give everyone their due, so that they may receive what they deserve, he says.

When God says that we should not give false witness God's real intention is that we should use our ears and our tongues, how we hear, how we judge, how we speak to promote the dignity and honour of others, he says.

When God says that we should not desire what belongs to others God's real intention is that we should use all our plans and designs to further the advantage and well-being and flourishing of others, he says.

We may easily think that all these no's have little to say to us – after all, we do not kill, we do not steal? Yet do we truly live the yes? Do we do everything in our power to promote the well-being of others? Do we give everyone their due? Do we give them honour and dignity through our ears and tongues? Do we really plan to serve the advantage and flourishing of our neighbours?

Always give account of the hope that is in you

Calvin was not the first to see the yes behind the no's. He himself stood in long traditions in which the church already knew that. In fact, these traditions go back to Jesus himself, in the truly surprising way in which he himself summarised the most important in the law.

Perhaps we no longer see how surprising it is because we have become too used to it, but when Jesus summarises the law he uses his own words to interpret the commandments of the law.



Jesus completely ignores the no's and only uses a positive yes to explain that this is really the point. We should love, says Jesus. We should love God. We should love our neighbour. This is the law and the prophets, he says.

Through the centuries this single yes would make many no's necessary. Whenever love is absent in times of darkness we are called to witness and confess. We are called to say no – in ever-changing new ways.

Always give account of the hope that is in you

When we commemorate *Belhar* these days after thirty years or more, the question is whether we have been faithful in giving account of this hope within us.

The question is not whether we have been no-sayers, although that was necessary and that remains necessary. The real question is whether we have been yes-sayers, whether people could hear and see our yes, our love, our hope in God's humanity and compassion, our own compassion for unity, for reconciliation, for justice, and for these together?

What do our communities and our societies see in our lives? What has URCSA looked like over these years, to outsiders? What do we really say yes for, stand for, are known for, in the eyes of those around us? How was URCSA experienced, by our own members, in our own congregations?

In the words of Peter, could we put those who criticise us to shame through our good conduct in Jesus Christ, through our love, through our hope in God's yes of humanity and grace and compassion?

Prayer of response

Hymn

Bodibeng jwa mahlomola,

Nkosi yam' iliZwi lakho

Moo ke neng ke tebile,

Lingumkhanyiseli wam'.

Ha ke se ke ya timela,

Nkosi yam', umusa wakho

Jesu, o no nkgopole;

Uyangenamisa nam'.

Wa hlaha, wa ntutubolla,

Ngithokoze, Nkosi yami,

Ka tsota dintle tsa hao,

Ngithokoze, Nkosi yam'.

Ka tseba le ho nyakalla,

Nkosi yam', umusa wakho

Hoba ke bone mohau.

Uyangenamisa nam'.



Kyk, Hy kom weer op die wolke,
Hy die Lam vir ons geslag.
Duisende uit alle volke
Bly die Heer se koms verwag.
Hy's die Alfa en Omega-
Kyk, Hy kom, bekleed met mag.
Hy's die Alfa en Omega-
Kyk, Hy kom, bekleed met mag.

Jesu, o itse ho rona:
Tlong ho nna, le se tshabe!
Hase meokgo ya lona
E ka le hlatswang dibe:
Ke nna ke le fang tshwarelo,
Ke nna ya le fodisang!
Morena, ha o rialo,
Re ka belaela jwang?

Psalm 113

L: Praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD, you his servants;
C: praise the name of the LORD.
L: Let the name of the LORD be praised,
C: both now and forevermore.
L: From the rising of the sun
to the place where it sets,
C: the name of the LORD is to be praised.
L: The LORD is exalted over all the nations,
C: his glory above the heavens.
L: Who is like the LORD our God,
the One who sits enthroned on high,
C: who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?
L: He raises the poor from the dust
C: and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
L: he seats them with princes,
C: with the princes of his people.
L: He settles the childless woman in her home
C: as a happy mother of children.
Praise the LORD.



Preparation for Holy Communion

1. Affirmation of human dignity

Communion song (verse 1)

God has made me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
We are precious in God's sight;
We-live together in the light.
Yes, God has made me (3X);
The Table shows me so.

I stand tall and dignified
in the presence of God
and among my fellow human beings.
I accept myself
as a precious and unique person,
created through Christ to be the image of the living God.
Together with animals, trees and rivers
we are one living community,
belonging to the earth, our common home.
Guided by the Spirit,
we discover who we are, as a family:
Motho ke motho ka batho.

2. Confession of sins (Hosanna 114)

Dibe di teng, re a di bona,
Dibe di re ja dipelo;
Re lliswa ke dibe tsa rona
Ka bohloko bo boholo.
[There are sins; we see them; Sins destroy our hearts;
We weep for our sins with deep sadness]



Jesu, unguMsindisi wethu,
Ufun' abadukileyo;
Uyazibon' izono zami,
Ngonakele, ngingcolile.
[Jesus, you are our Saviour, You seek the lost;
You can see my sins, I am a mess, I am unclean.]

Tlosa dibe, tlosa ditshila,
Moya wa ka o be motle,
Dintho tse mphe ke a di ila,
Ako di lahlele ka ntle!
[Remove the sins and the dirt, That my soul may be good;
I avoid bad things; Throw them far out there!]

3. **Proclamation of forgiveness** (Romans 8:1-2)

There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.
For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
has set you free
from the law of sin and of death.

4. **Renewed commitment to serve God** (1 John 4:19-21)

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

5. **Sharing the peace** (Hosanna 295)

1.Bohle re baena, bohle re baena,	2.Re be bathusani, re be bathusani,
Balatedi ba Jesu, Kreste!	Bahlanka ba Morena Jesu!



Re ke re ratane, re ke ratane,
Hoba ha ho mona ho yena!

Re ke re kopane, re se arohane,
Ha ho karohano hodimo.

[We are all brothers and sisters,
Followers of Jesus Christ
We must love one another,
Because there is no jealousy in him]

[We must help one another, servants of the
Lord Jesus!
We must unite, we must not be divided,
There is no disunity above]

3.Re kopaneng re be lekgotla le le leng,
Bahlabani ba Jesu, Kreste,
Re tle re lwane ka dipelo tse tshwanang,
Thetso ha e yo lehodimong!

Re tla thaba ha re kopana hodimo
Tlotlisong ya Mora Modimo,
Hoba ke ka matla a tswang lehodimong
Re fihliswang le lona kganyeng.

[We must be united and be one party,
soldiers of Jesus Christ
We must fight with one heart,
There is no untruth in heaven]

[We will be happy when we meet above,
giving glory to the Son of God,
Because it is with the power from heaven
That we are all enabled to arrive with you in
glory]

6. Confessing our faith

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God



the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Communion Song (verse 3)

God unites us at a feast,
South and North and West and East;
Fears and grudges lose their hold
when God's Spirit takes control.
Yes, God unites us (3X);
the Table show us so.

Form ('formulier') for Holy Communion

The table set before us is a sign and seal of unity in the Lord Jesus Christ. The dividing walls of fear and hostility between us have been broken down through his death and resurrection. We are members of one body, called together from the whole of humanity. We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who have gone before us and by those who are still to be born, the one Body of Christ across all barriers of time and space, language and race, gender and age. At this table the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to God and to each other, so that we may embrace as sisters and brothers of one family.

This table is a sign and seal of reconciliation through the Lord Jesus Christ, an event of healing in a broken world. At this table we celebrate the fact that in Christ God has conquered the powers of sin and death, irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, opening to us the way to make peace. So this table challenges us to admit the guilt of our words and deeds that have harmed others, our silence and neglect that have exposed them to harm. This table helps us to acknowledge the guilt and fear, grudges and hatred that we



harbour within us, and gives us the humility and courage to approach one another to try and find each other.

This table is a sign and seal of God's justice. Here we remember the Passover, how God led the people of Israel out of slavery, because God has always hated injustice and exploitation. We receive justice as a gift at this table, because God levels us with one another, accepts each one of us as created in God's image, and as equally precious members of the Body of Christ. We joyfully share God's abundance, so that no one has too much and no one goes hungry. No one is a second class citizen who comes afterwards to pick up the crumbs that have fallen from this table; there is enough for all of us. Therefore, we receive justice as an obligation at this table: God sends us into our broken and unequal society to go and stand where God stands: with those who are poor and excluded and wronged. God sends us to go and change every table where we sit to become like this one: a space of inclusion, justice, dignity, equality and sharing.

Explanation of procedure: 7 tables; Wine and grape juice

Empty chair

Invitation

In the name of the Lord, I now invite all who are baptised, members of the URCSA and of other churches and who have recommitted themselves to God and to one another in this service, to come and partake of the Lord's Supper. You are welcome at this table of unity, reconciliation and justice. Come now, for everything is ready.

Eucharistic prayer

Words of institution

Celebration

Prayer of thanksgiving

- L: Bless the LORD, O my soul,
C: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
L: Bless the LORD, O my soul,
C: and do not forget all his benefits
L: who forgives all your iniquity,
C: who heals all your diseases,
L: who redeems your life from the Pit,
C: who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,



L: who satisfies you with good as long as you live
C: so that your youth is renewed like that of an eagle.

Lord's Prayer (in isiZulu)

Baba wethu osezulwini,
malingcweliswe igama lakho;
mawufike umbuso wakho;
mayenziwe intando yakho emhlabeni njengasezulwini;
usiphe namuhla isinkwa sethu
semihla ngemihla;
usithethelele amacala ethu,
njengalokhu nathi sibathethelela
abanecala kithi;
ungasingenisi ekulingweni,
kodwa usikhulule kokubi;
ngokuba umbuso ungowakho,
namandla, nenkazimulo,
kuze kube phakade. Amen.

Offering: Procedure Purpose (for the four ministerial formation centres of the URCSA)

Announcements

Intercession prayers (women, men, youth)

Communion Song (verse 5)

God now sends us out from here
to-live his gospel far and near;
Young and old can work for him,
Members of his kingdom team.
Yes, God now sends us (3X);
The Table shows us so.



Renewed commitment to the Confession of Belhar

L: We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Who gathers, protects and nourishes the church
from the beginning of the world to the end

**C: The church is one;
the church is holy; the church is universal.**

**It is the community of God's children,
called together from the whole of humanity**

L: We believe that the reconciling work of Christ
gives birth to a uniting church,
because church unity is a gift from God
and a goal we need to strive for.

**C: The unity of the church must become visible
so that the people around us can see
how separation and hatred are overcome in Christ.**

L: We believe that genuine faith in Jesus Christ
is the only condition for membership
in this Christian church

**C: So we praise God
That colour, class, gender, or culture
does not determine who belongs to this church**

L: We believe that God has entrusted to the church the message of reconciliation,
that we are called to be peacemakers:
the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

**C: We celebrate God's victory in the cross of Christ
over all the forces of division and bitterness.**

**God's Word and Spirit enable us now
to become a community of hope –
witnesses to the new heaven and the new earth
where righteousness dwells.**



L: We believe that the church, belonging to God,
should stand where God stands:
against injustice and with those who are wronged.

**C: We oppose every policy that causes injustice:
We witness against the powerful
who seek their own interest and harm others.
We stand with those who suffer –
sharing our lives with them.**

L: We are called to confess and to do all this
in obedience to Jesus Christ, our only Lord;
even if authorities or laws oppose this;
even if punishment and suffering are the result

**C: Jesus is Lord! We will follow him!
To the one God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory for ever and ever! Amen**

Closing hymn (Hosanna 442)

Joko ya hao e bobebe,	Your yoke is light
E nkgatholola pelo;	it eases my heart;
Tumelo ho nna ke thebe	To me faith is a shield
E tla mphemisa lefu.	It will save me from death.
Nyakallo ke e fumane	I found joy
Tseleng ya hao, Morena;	In your way, Lord;
Dira ho nna di qhalane,	My enemies are scattered,
Ke hloletswe ke wena.	You have conquered for me.

O re ho nna, ke lelale,	You tell to me look forward
Ke tshepe lehodimo;	trusting in heaven;
Moeti ha a kgathale,	A stranger never gets tired,
O pepjwa ke Modimo.	being carried by God.
Efela ho dutse jwalo,	Indeed, it remains like that,



Esale o nthatile; since you loved me;
O mphodisitse matswalo, You have comforted me
Mme jwale ke thabile. and now I am still happy.

Ho tla ba jwang ha ke siya How will it be when I leave
Kobo ena e bolang, this mortal body?
Ke be jwaleka Elia, I should be like Elijah
Ka koloing e fofang? in a flying chariot.
Ke tla opa ka diatla, I will clap my hands
Ke tla re: Halleluya! And say: Halleluya!
Halleluya ho senatla Halleluya to the great One
Se kenyang ha Jehova! Who takes me to Jehova!

Benediction (7 regional moderators)

Prof Leepo Modise declares the synod adjourned and announces that in 2020 the General Synod will meet in Cape Synod for the Eight General Synod.

Duly signed by the Moderature

Moderator.....

Assessor.....

Actuarius.....

Scribe.....

