



URCSA

NEWS • NUUS

DECEMBER 2023

PEACE BE WITH THE NATIONS – THE PRINCE OF PEACE IS BORN



We as the church and the nation, we will be celebrating Christmas under severe fear of Global conflicts that, affected the lives of many South Africans and the entire world. We as Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) as the community of believers as per Article one of the Church Order and as a community as per African-Reformed Philosophy, when one is in joy all will rejoice with him or her, equally when one is in sorrow all will suffer with him or her. We are approaching Christmas and the New Year when the World is troubled by the Russia-Ukraine War as well as Israel-Palestine War these wars and other Wars that are not receiving enough publication elsewhere, are troubling the lives of many people. These Wars also threatened the Christian faith.

There is hope within the Christian faith that always carry us through troubling times. When the Prince of peace is born there will be no war nor conflict because of the meaning of Christian faith which ought to be religion of peace. Prophet Isaiah puts it very well in his prophesy: “Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged

the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as the people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.” This Prophecy is still relevant in this festive seasons for the people of God who are faced with oppression, exploitation, conflicts, wars and death. We as the URCSA, when we celebrate Christmas let us always leave an empty chair or space around our meals to remember those who do not have meals, those who do not have peace in their lives due to conflicts and wars, in Africa, Asia, Europe and America (Black lives matters).

We as URCSA we reaffirm the words of World Council of Churches on Christmas message that with those words:

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it –John 1:3-5. In so many ways we, and our whole world, are living through a time of darkness, when mounting challenges threaten to diminish our hope, to overwhelm our will to meet the evident needs and palpable pains of our day, and even to sap our dedication to

truth and justice. Yet, as disciples of Jesus and as Christian communities united in Christ’s love, we are called to stand up to fear, counter falsehood, challenge selfishness and greed, and offer hope to the whole world. We cannot acquiesce in disappointment nor succumb to despair. The world needs more from us— more courage, more creativity, more inspiration and dedication. More self-giving love.

We as URCSA , in this festive season let us live our confession of Belhar by being the light and the salt of the world by becoming more self-giving love, in standing with those who are oppressed, impoverished, destitute, wronged and killed for their birth right in their land. Let us enjoy the festive seasons but we must not forget the poor, Belhar confession ought to be our DNA as URCSA. The empty chair or space around the meal is vital for the Belharic community.

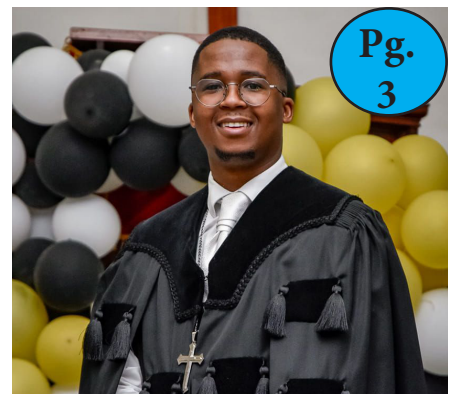
Amidst all these conflicts, wars and so-called superpower, remember that we confess “Jesus is Lord”, the Prince of peace, Wonderful counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father. Who will increase his government and peace on the world!

INSIDE



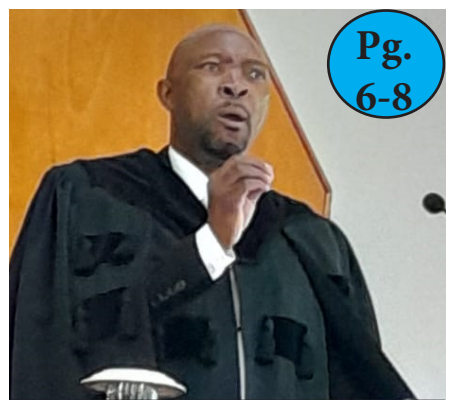
Pg.2

RIP PAPI KHOMANE



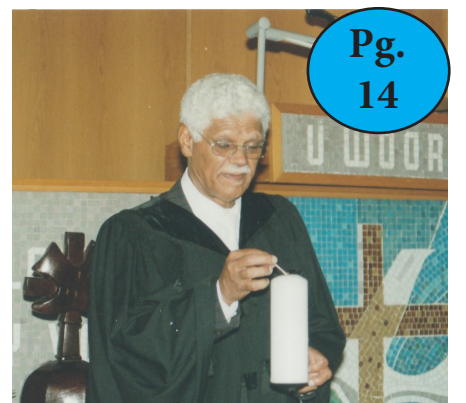
Pg. 3

INDUCTIONS & ORDINATIONS



Pg. 6-8

REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATORS



Pg. 14

REMEMBERING PROF CLOETE

EDITORIAL

We have come to the end of 2023. This edition will be the last one for the year. This year has not been without challenges but by the grace of God we managed to overcome and heal in many ways. The stories and articles in this edition are evidence of the good work done everywhere in URCSA through the power of the Holy Spirit. You will find that these stories connect us with one another in spite of the geographical distances. You will find that our struggles are not just privately owned but also experienced by others in a different way at a different address. We all know the joy that victory brings but we also know

the pain that struggles opens up. So, we invite you to journey through this newspaper and see the hand of God at work in these stories, interviews and articles. We know that you will be encouraged and inspired by these stories. As you and your family prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ and welcome the New Year thereafter, we want to extend to you our warmest wishes. May this Christmas season be filled with hope, peace, joy and love. May you see God at work in your own life and may you experience His provision in a tangible way. May His unmerited grace and unfailing love remain with you during this time..

Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous new year!

URCSA NEWS TEAM

MRS KEFILOE FOKASE
fokasek@gmail.com

REV LYSANDER PRINS

REV HENDRY TROMP

REV KATLEHO MOKOENA
Layout Designer



Office Contact details:

General Synod Admin
Ms Marydith Buys
Tel: 067 166 5928
Facsimile: 0865183933
admin.gs@urcsa.org.za

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.

GENERAL SYNOD NOTICES

10 - 13 April 2024

PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

in Durban,

Kwa-Zulu Natal,

South Africa

URCSA is currently in the midst of organizing a partnership conference with the aim of reflecting on our collective accomplishments, addressing challenges, and formulating a comprehensive plan to sustain the ongoing growth and impact of our partnership.

We eagerly anticipate the enthusiastic participation of our partner churches in this supportive moment for the church.

14 April 2024

30th CELEBRATION

ANNIVERSARY OF URCSA

in Durban,

Kwa-Zulu Natal,

South Africa

Save the date: We're excited to announce a special celebration service in Kwa-Zulu Natal, where we'll join in celebration with our ecumenical partners. We anticipate a turnout of at least 1000 congregants for this special service, and everyone is welcome from all regions to be part of this joyous occasion. Save the date and join us in the celebration.

PAPI KHOMANE

31 JANUARY 1975 - 25 NOVEMBER 2023



The URCSA is deeply saddened by the passing of Mr Papi "Oupa" Khomane. He was the former captain of Orlando Pirates FC, player of Jomo Cosmos FC, and played for the South African national team - Bafana Bafana. Khomane was a member of URCSA Klipspruit congregation, in the Witwatersrand Presbytery of the Southern Synod, where he was a passionate member of the Christian Men's Ministry (CMM). Khomane passed away in a tragic car accident together with his mother Rita Nomasonto Khomane - a church elder of URCSA Klipspruit and his uncle Moffat Norman Nkosi. The memorial service was held at Grace Bible Church on the 30th of November 2023 and the funeral was held on the 2nd of December 2023 at URCSA Klipspruit. We send our deepest condolences to the family and pray for God's comfort and strength.



Picture credit:
X/@OrlandoPirates

ORDINATIONS & INDUCTIONS



Proponent Anthony Cloete was ordained at Urcsa Eendekuil on the 28-29 October 2023.



Proponent Rachel Heradine Linderoth was ordained at Urcsa Viliersdorp on 4-5 Nov 2023.



Reverend Trevor Links was inducted at URCSA The Strand on the 8th of October 2023.



Ordination of Prop. Thabang Bookholane at URCSA Trompsburg, Fauresmith, Bethulie & Smithfield on the 23rd of September 2023



Ordination of Prop. Ishmael Phara at URCSA Eendraght - Leslie Congregation on the 16th of September 2023.



Ordination of Prop. Tshediso Pudumo at URCSA Boipatong Congregation on the 9th of September 2023.



Induction of Rev. Thembane Kgwete at URCSA Evaton Noord on the 30th of September 2023.



Induction of Rev. Ponoane Ponoane at URCSA Warrenton on the 1st of October 2023.



Induction of Rev Moroesi Tsoai-Setoto at URCSA Rust-Ter-Vaal Congregation on the 23rd of September 2023.

THE CONFESSION OF BELHAR IS A PASTORAL DOCUMENT THAT CAN HEAL US FROM OUR PAIN

**Annual Belhar Lecture (summary) delivered on 26 September 2023
at the Cape Regional Synod
by Prof. Christina Landman**



The Belhar Confession is admired and loved because of its true doctrine on unity, reconciliation and justice.

However, the Belhar Confession is also a pastoral document, that can heal us from our pain today. How can I say that? I hereby want to show that the Belhar Confession contains language of care and compassion that can heal us from the pain caused by our wrong beliefs.

During my years as a minister of the Word in the URCSA, I have observed at least five 'beliefs' that keep us captive in pain and mental misery.

The first of these beliefs is: **When I suffer, it is because God is punishing me.** However, the Confession of Belhar does not present God as the One punishing his people. In Article 1 of the Confession we confess that we believe in "the triune God... who ... gathers, protects and cares for the church." God protects and cares for his church not only as an institution but as people. In Article 5 we confess that we believe in a God

that, in a special way, is "the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged".. We believe in a God who "brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry...frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind... supports the down-trodden, protects the stranger, (and) helps orphans and widows..."

It reminds me of Yolanda, a congregant, who was raped by three men on her way to work very early in the morning. She came for counselling, believing that God was punishing her in some way. The people at church told her so, and also her boyfriend left her because he said that God obviously had something against her. It were the words of the Belhar Confession, that she should rather turn to God for care, support and help that assisted Yolanda to start finding her way towards healing.

A second belief that keep believers trapped in misery and despair, is the question **whether Christ is indeed stronger than the devil or the *sangoma*.** When misfortune befalls us, does it not proof that evil is stronger than Any-

one else? Believers often struggle with this question.

It reminds me of Radikobo whose wife collapsed and died at the hospital. The doctors could not give him a reason for her death, neither could the church. He therefore believed that there was an evil spell placed on her. It was only through the confession in Article 6 of the Belhar Confession, "Jesus is Lord", that the minister could convince him that Christ was in control, and Radikobo could start his journey towards healing.

Thirdly, believers often **feel alone in this world, afraid and deserted.** And this in spite of the fact that in Article 5 of the Belhar Confession we confess our God-inspired belief "that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need...; (and) that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands...". How can we allow one another to be alone and afraid when we confess our God-directed involvement with one another?

This brings back the memory of Deb-

orah. She is a domestic worker who raised four children who all became professional people. However, eventually they all returned home with AIDS. She looked after them, not protecting herself with gloves and contracted HIV herself. Inspired by the constant emphasis in the congregation on the call of the Confession of Belhar, the women of the congregation set out to assist Deborah and to secure that she receives antiretrovirals. Now, this is “doing” what we confess in the Belhar Confession.

The fourth ‘belief’ that keeps a believer stuck in desperation, is that he or she has no more opportunities and is helpless in terms of spiritual gifts, except for pleading with God to intervene.

Prayer is, of course, the believer’s most important tool to discuss his or her problems with God and to seek leadership and intervention. And yet the Belhar Confession, Article 3, confirms that God’s gift of opportunities and spiritual presents is for everybody, and in abundance. While praying, the believer can and should acknowledge his or her

God-given strengths, and seek opportunities to apply these strengths.

Lesedi is a young and competent person. People easily feel threatened by her. She consequently suffered many losses. Her work fired her on the grounds of insubordination. Although she is a member of URCSA, she attended a church that tried to drive the ‘spirit of insubordination’ out of her. Her mother chased her out of the house. She was placed on a road of hope only after she has internalised the Christ of the Belhar Confession who empowers her through her own spiritual gifts and who gives her opportunities.

In the fifth place, believers often lose hope that, in their case, no reconciliation between fighting parties or peace is possible anymore. They feel that their situation is so bad that there is no way out.

And yet, the Belhar Confession in Article 4 confesses “that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness

and enmity...”.

It reminds me of oom Koos and auntie Kobie, and their son who is deeply engaged in drugs. The son often attacks them for money for drugs. But they never give up on their son. Even when he gets arrested for stealing, and dealing, they help and support him, believing like the Belhar Confession that reconciliation, recovery and eventually peace are always possible.

So, let us confess our belief in the pastoral power of the Confession of Belhar.

The soft power of the Belhar Confession confirms our belief in

- God who cares
- Christ who conquers evil through love
- the congregation as a community of care
- our God-empowered spiritual gifts and opportunities
- reconciliation and peace.

The soft power of the Belhar Confession is as strong as heaven, because it is a power that heals.

What is the Christian Women’s League (CWL)?

CWL is launched in the four (4) regions, namely: Kwa Zulu Natal, Free-State and Lesotho, Southern Synod and Northern Synod, with 2 (two) branches in the Synod of Phororo. There are plans to launch CWL in all regions. The launch of the CWL will be announced in 2024 after all the processes of the church are finalised.

MOTTO:

God’s Inspired and bonded women in active faith.

VISION:

We envisage empowering women to build a strong network that will establish a kingdom of God through service and witness.

MISSION:

- To promote unity, reconciliation and justice
- To organise and run seminars, conferences, and annual general meetings for the purpose of social skills and regeneration of morality and lending support to the needy.
- To organise Bible studies for spiritual and physical growth.



- To promote financial sustainability in the church.

The objectives of the CWL are:

- To study the word of God on weekly basis to enrich the lives of the women in Church and Society.
- To address social challenges and inform the church and society about the availability of resources.
- To establish and run short-term and long-term projects within the church and society
- To raise awareness of communicable diseases and preventative measures.
- To contextualise the scripture in relation to HIV/AIDS and other diseases.
- To raise awareness on human dignity and basic human rights.

- To educate and train members to address all social ills in the church and society.\

The General Synod CWL Executive committee that will be elected at the congress, should do the following:

- Visit the Regions that haven’t launched CWL
- Conduct workshop in those regions.
- Have outreach programmes to those Regions
- Advertise the ministry on Social Media and also on the URCSA Newsletter.

The Mission, Vision, Motto and Objectives mentioned here, are from the Constitution that was approved at the General Synod Sitting of October 2022 in Stellenbosch, Cape Town.

GET TO KNOW REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATORS AND THEIR VISION FOR THEIR SYNODS AS WELL AS THEIR FESTIVE MESSAGES



CAPE REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATOR



Rev Hendry Tromp is the son of Paulina Tromp, who washed, ironed, and sewed the clothes of the students at Nuwe Hoop Centre for the Hearing Impaired and the son of Jack Tromp, who preached the gospel of Christ on the street corners of their community. In September 1994 he committed his life to Christ during a Vacation Bible School (VBS) led by his late spiritual mentors, Anty Vera De Vries and Anty Beaty De Vries (the daughters of the late Rev De Vries). He is the husband of Esmarelda Tromp and are blessed with three children.

He is the minister of Gelvandale congregation in the Presbytery of Port Elizabeth, situated within the Eastern Cape. In all the years of his ministry, he has committed to love God unashamedly and serve others enthusiastically. As the Moderator of URCSA Cape, he says he will continue to build on this commitment. The 8th Regional Synod meeting identified several focus areas that need to be addressed during this recess. Some of these focus areas are Deepening (Internal) Unity, Vacant Congregations, The Alternative dispute Resolution (ADR), Minister Conferences, further support to female ministers, Continuous support of special needs members at all levels of the church and further research on many themes and topics identified by Synod.

His message for the festive season: “there is a lot of disappointments that people have experienced during this year. Many dreams did not materialize as expected. But, when we look into Advent and Christmas season it is a time for us to take up hope once more. To believe that even in our darkest moments that the baby born of the virgin Mary is indeed our Immanuel – God with us. May all our members experience hope, peace, joy and love in a tangible way during this Advent and Christmas season.”

NAMIBIA REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATOR

Rev Soraya Mostert-Gertze was born in the Rehoboth area called Ruimte in Namibia. In January 1997 she entered the doors of the Faculty of Theology in Bellville and completed her studies in 2002. She became the first female Reverend in Namibia when she was ordained in Okahandja and Windhoek congregation on the 23rd of September 2012. She is married and blessed with two beautiful children Danica (11) and Juradian (7).

On the 4th of May 2023 she became the first female Reverend to be elected as the Moderator of the Namibia Regional Synod. Her vision is to establish more models, healing ministries, equip people to work with broken people as there are different types of poverty. “The church at this moment struggles with

poverty, social injustices, financial difficulties, baby dumpings, corruption, global warming so many other things. We need to roll up our sleeves, get our hands dirty and walk to the end of the world. If we as a collective team can roll some stumbling blocks away, paves the ways, a lot can be done,” she said.

Her message for the festive season: “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. As 2024 is almost here, I am standing in awe before Him, grateful for all the opportunities, new tomorrows, new dreams and new worlds that we can open, therefore my loved ones *Vlieg hoog en Vlieg ver.*”



NORTHERN REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATOR



Rev Dr Elias Monhla is the son of Rosina Monhla and the late Theodore. His journey to the ministry has been influenced by his late grand mother Marara Sarah Monhla. She contributed more in building the Kingdom of God in the then farming communities of Groetspelonke in the far Limpopo area. Yes, the wife of the late Elias Mpolaene Monhla Snr, the then Koster of Soekmekaar Gemeente. He was ordained at URCSA Sebokeng Zone 13 congregation on the 1st August 2015. He received his second calling as the minister of the word at URCSA Akasia Congregation as from the 12th August 2017 to date. He was elected as the General Synod Scribe in 2022 GS sitting at Stellenbosch.

Even though the Northern Regional Synod has not yet had a synod sitting because of court challenges, as the current Moderator, his vision is to rebuild and unify the synod. More so to take synod back to its glory days when Northern synod was known as the Synod of choice and Order. Secondly, is to refocus in getting the administration office to be positive financial viability. This can only be attained if all congregations are able to fulfil Biblical commitment of tithing as stated by the scriptures.

His message for the festive season: “I extend my heartfelt best wishes to each and every one of you. May the joy and hope that Christmas brings fill your hearts and homes with love, peace, and unity.”

PHORORO REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATOR

Rev. Johan Julies is married to Lario Julies and have two sons, Lemuel and Beauden. He is from Kakamas and is a full-time minister at URC Rainbow within the Presbytery of Upington for the past 19 years. His vision for his term as moderator for the Phororo regional synod is to be a synod that is committed to unity, reconciliation and justice. The challenges within the Synod that will be addressed under his leadership among others are vacant congregations. Phororo regional synod is composed of 39 Congregations with only 16 ministers.

His message for the festive season is: “Christmas is the season where we as Christians celebrate God’s greatest gift to this world, His son, Jesus Christ. Christmas is the opportunity to reflect and thank God for the love, hope and peace that we find in Christ our Redeemer. May our celebrations include the One who is called wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. My prayer is that we all will have a blessed Christmas and a prosperous new year.”

SOUTHERN REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATOR



Rev BB Senokoane was born in Malebogo, a small township in Hertzogville in the Free State Province, Tokologo Municipality. He is the son of Ranko January Senokoane and Mmatau Sarah Senokoane. He is the grandson of Ben Senokoane and Madisebo Sophie Senokoane (Nkokoana). He is the great grandson of Koos Senokoane who was a Koster of the NGKA Hertzogville. His family originates from the farms of Boshof where his great grandfather was a farm manager.

He has been a minister of Lakeside since 2006 to date. His vision is for the Southern Synod to be a witness of Lord’s favor to the poor, unemployed, widows and widower, etc. The Synod should be able to prove that Jesus is the Lord through deeds. He would also want to see a Synod that participates and contribute in the economy and become the Bethlehem (the house of bread). He says: “we should be able to run business projects to sustain the synod but also have enough capital for the benefit of our members. We have started this with the previous moderators and ours is to implement.”

He says, “the biggest challenge is to be a relevant church guided by the Gospel of Jesus Christ but also within the communities. The church must be visible and be there for the needy and its members spiritually, politically, economically, socially, etc.” The Southern Synod has managed to raise capital from a history of debts to a positive. The Synod has for many years been politically strong from all the different generations and has had strategic Moderators who have each contributed to the outlook of the Synod. Succession planning has been one of the best strategy for the synod. Part of the vision is to strengthen the business model of the church, investment in properties and other businesses will be their biggest focus.

His message for the festive season: “we hereby wish our members a happy festive. They must remember that Christmas is suppose to be goodness to the poor. They should remember them and share with them during this season especially under this difficult economic situation.”



FREESTATE AND LESOTHO REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATOR

Rev Langa Petrus Fokase was born in Fauriesmith, furthered his studies at Lefika: University of Qwaqwa (Uniqwa), and has the following qualifications: MA History; MA Church History and Polity and currently busy with PhD Practical Theology. He married Palesa Alphoncinah Fokase (Bezant) on the 10th December 1988. They are blessed with 3 children, two sons and one daughter: Fokase, Tatani, and Nomthandazo. Daughters in-laws are Kefiloe Nolanga and Palesa Mambhele; grandchildren are Siyabonga and Zanda’Isibusiso.

Rev Fokase has held the following church leadership positions:

- 1. Elected as Actuarius - 2009 Regional Synod;
- 2. Re-elected as Actuarius - 2013 Regional Synod;
- 3. Elected as Moderator by Special RSC March 2021;
- 4. Elected as Moderator - 2023 October RS sitting;
- 5. Elected as Rep of FS&L 2016 GS level and
- 6. Re-elected as Rep of FS&L 2022 GS level

He was at URCSA Excelsior from 1991 to 2006 and currently at URCSA Bloem Wes since 2007. His vision is to bring unity, justice and reconciliation across the regional synod. Some of the challenges within the regional synod that are to be addressed are: division among congregations creating groups; rebuilding the Synod Church Office; vacant congregations; IM Model to be fully implemented across the synod; and working relationship between the moderamen and all ministries

His message for the festive season: “Wishing you all a Christmas filled with peace that the Lord is our only saviour for our lives, may we fully depend on him. Blessings for the next year.”



KZN REGIONAL SYNOD MODERATOR



Rev Nkosinathi Lawrence Mbatha is the last born son of both late Rev Ambrosias Sydney and Duduzile Lillian Mbatha. He was licenced by the Northern Synod after attending ministry training at Northern Theological Seminary in 2019 after completing Bachelor of Theology at UNISA in 2015, Bachelor of Theology Honours in Theological Ethics at UNISA in 2017 and Masters in Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria in 2018. He just completed Doctor of Theology in Ministerial Studies/ Practical Theology at the University of KwaZulu- Natal and will be graduating in May 2024. He was ordained in URCSA Greytown in 2019.

As the newly elected moderator of KZN regional synod, his vision is to respond to article 29 of Belgic Confession which speaks of the signs of a living church: proclamation of the Word of God, administering of holy sacraments and discipline. Implement and defend the resolutions of the General and Regional Synod. Assist in addressing the shortage of ministers in KZN Region and empowerment of church leaders. Assist in implementation of gender equity and involvement of youth in all Church Councils, Presbyteries and Regional Synod.

His message for the festive season: “May this beautiful festive season fill your heart with love, your home with joy and your life with laughter. Happy Holidays. Wishing you and your families love, peace and joy. Lastly, always remember not to consume too much alcohol and do not drink and drive.”

HOW TO STAY MENTALLY HEALTHY

We cannot talk about mental health before we define what Health is: Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, act, how we relate to others, how we handle stress and make healthy choices. It is all about how people think, feel and behave. Mental Health begins with feeling good about yourself.

- Eat brain healthy diet
- Exercise, walk for 30 minutes can boost and improve mental health, and stay active.
- Have time to relax.

- Proper sleep, maintain the sleep hygiene, (sleep hygiene refers to healthy habits, behaviours and environmental factors that can be adjusted to help you have a good night’s sleep.)
- Develop coping skills, meditate, and find hobbies e.g. gardening.
- Stress management skills are very important: develop a style that will act as a buffer against the effect of stress.
- Be assertive.
- Develop an effective support system.
- Have clear objectives.

- Be clear about your values.
- Stay connected.
- Avoid substances, e.g. alcohol and drugs.

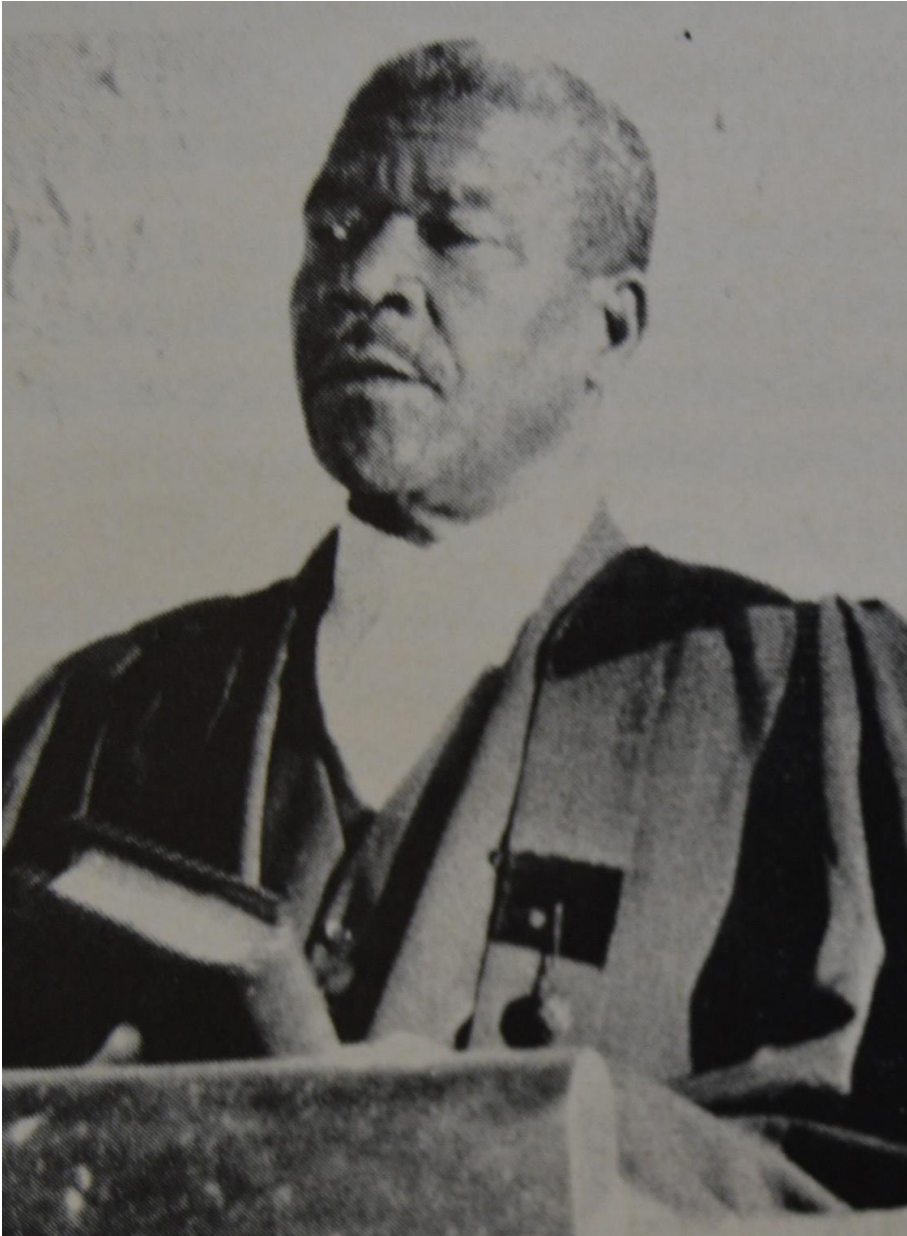
Prayer and scripture reading is very important. In Matthew 22 verse 37 God wants His people first and above all to love Him with every part of their being. The heart, soul and mind may describe the centre of emotion, action and thought.

In conclusion, Mental Health is a universal human right.

Compiled by Elder Florence Makobonyane (Southern Synod).



PIONEERS OF OUR CHURCH PART 1



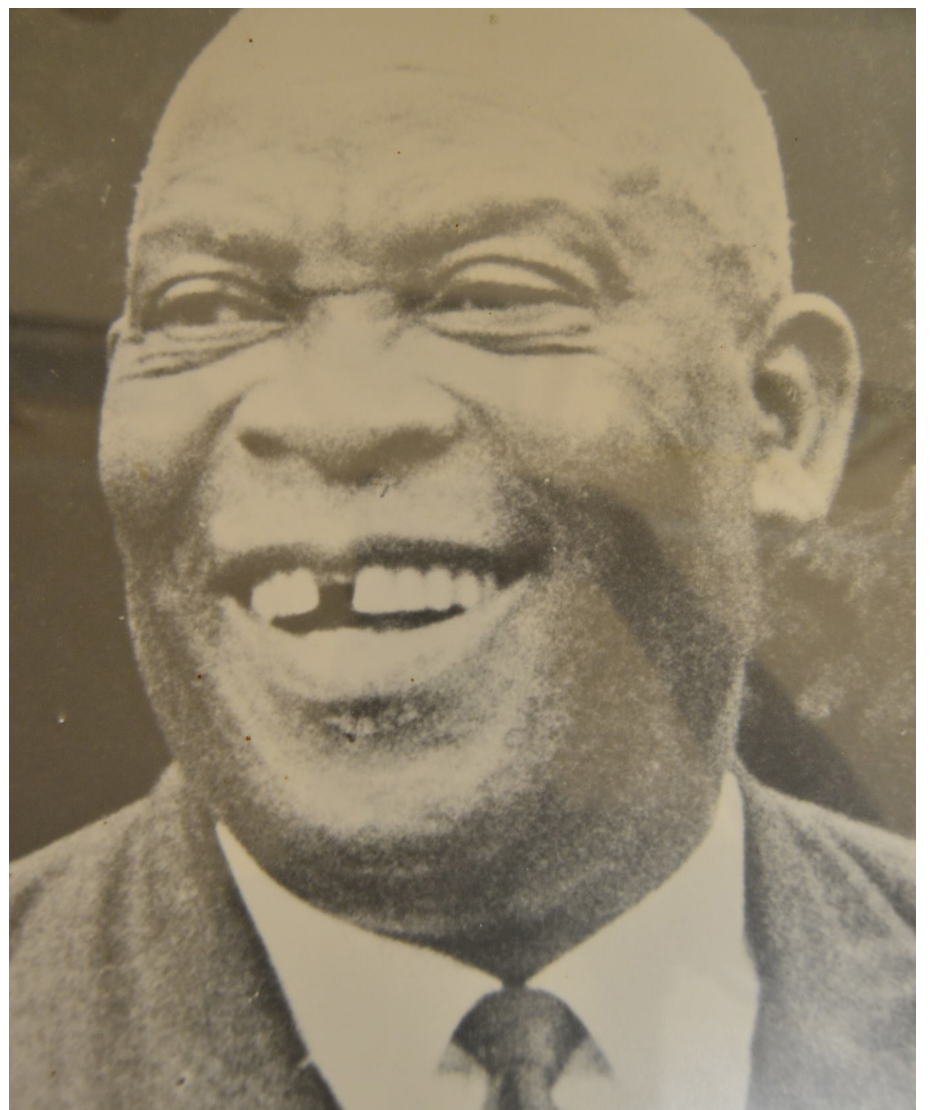
Dr. Samuel Samson Tema (10 Oct. 1899 - 7 April 1981)

Dr. Tema is considered as a pioneer in the history of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa between 1932-1970. He was a student leader at the Stofberg Theological School and got licenced in 1935 and became a Reverend in the congregation of Orlando in 1938. In the same year, he was a delegate of the Christian Council of Southern Africa, the well-known mission conference of the Internatinal Missionary Council at Tambaran in India. In 1964, he took part in the meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Frankfurt where he was elected as the president of the Africa division. In his capacity, he partook in different leadership meetings in Manila, Toronto and Beirut. The Mary Holmes College in the USA gave him an honourary doctorate for his outstanding service to the church over many years. Dr. Tema also represented his church in different meetings on the All Africa Conference of Churches in Kitwe, Kampala and Abidjan. Dr. Tema was the first Reverend in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to be invited to the USA in terms of the U.S Leader Exchange Programme in 1964. He was also a founding leader of the Interdenominational African Ministers' Association (Idamasa) and served for many years as its president. In regards to the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, Dr. Tema served at the congregation of Orlando from 1940-1949. From 1949-1967 served as a Reverend in the congregation of Tshwane. He was the first son of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to serve as part of the moderaman. In the Synod of 1951 in Middelburg, he was elected as the assistant scribe and the following Synod of 1956 in Belfast, he was elected as the assessor of the Synod. In 1960 at the Synod in Potchefstroom, he was elected as the assessor as well as in 1964 at the Synod in Mamelodi.

Reverend Sekano S. G. Ntaone (14 April 1904 - 14 May 1981)

Rev Ntaone was born in Hebron, Pretoria on the 14th of April 1904. He studied education at Adam's College (Amanzimtoti) and at the Stofberg Gedenkskool. He taught at different schools in the Free State and maintained his interest in the teaching profession throughout his life. After years of being a teacher, he went back to the Stofberg Gedenkskool to be theologically trained in order to be a minister of the Word. He served as Reverend at the congregation of Klerksdorp from 1941-1950, as a hospital worker in Johannesburg from 1950-1951, as Reverend at Moroka from 1952-1969, and as a hospital worker at Germiston from 1969-1976.

At the Synod of 1964 in Mamelodi, he was elected as assessor and later in the same year on the departure of the moderator Reverend J. M. A. De Beer, Rev Ntaone then became the chairperson of the Synodical Commission. At the Synod of Potchefstroom in 1964 Reverend Ntaone was elected as the moderator to serve the church until 1972. In 1967 at Meadowlands Reverend Ntaone was the second black Reverend that held the assessor position of the General Synod, following in the footsteps of Dr. M. L. Maile. Throughout his service Reverend Ntaone had lifelong interest in the teaching profession and served as the chairperson of the Moroka school council. The Sekano Ntaone Highschool in Soweto is named after him for his lifelong service. He was also on the Education Advisory Council at the University of the North. He had great love for music and singing that influenced the church choral music. Choirs of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa developed significantly under his leadership and yearly there were choirs that compete to win the S. G. S. Ntaone trophy. Reverend Ntaone will always be remembered as a spiritual leader that served God and helped build the church constructively.





A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE URCSA ON THE WAR IN GAZA

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), at the meeting of its General Synodical Commission on 6-8 November 2023, resolved to issue a public statement on the violent conflict taking place between the Israeli government and Hamas in Gaza. The primary purpose of this statement is to give guidance to URCSA members on how to view the conflict and how to respond to it. It is also a public comment, informed by the Confession of Belhar, on this deeply disturbing conflict. We cannot remain silent in the face of these unfolding events.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

We issue this statement in solidarity with the Palestinian Christians who issued the Palestinian Kairos Document in 2009 and the following recent public statements:

“Kairos Palestine Statement on the War on Gaza” (11 October 2023):
We all say, No, to the War. We all say, Yes, to peace, and to working for a just and final solution to an existing conflict and to the injustice that has been imposed on the Palestinian people for more than 70 years. Israel does not see the Palestinian people as having any right to exist, and the international community is too weak to implement its decisions to find a just and final solution. We all mourn and console all the victims on both sides of the conflict. A human being is a human being, both Israeli and Palestinian, and every human being is dear in the eyes of God, and in the eyes of his family, relatives, and loved ones. No to war, yes to a just and final peace.

“A Call for Repentance: An Open Letter from Palestinian Christians to Western Church Leaders and Theologians” (23 October 2023):

We say it with a broken heart, we hold western church leaders and theologians who rally behind Israel’s wars accountable for their theological and political complicity in the Israeli crimes against the Palestinians, which have been committed over the last 75 years. We call upon them to reexamine their positions and to change their direction, remembering that God “will judge the world in justice” (Acts 17:31).

“Joint Open Letter to Church leaders and Christians in the USA, Europe and the Ecumenical Family” (2 November 2023):

We are witnessing a genocide against Palestinians in Gaza unfolding in front of our eyes, not dissimilar to what happened less than 30 years ago in Rwanda and 80 years ago in Europe. Many in the West were complicit in those genocides. We cannot and dare not let it happen again. It must be stopped.

We view the conflict from the vantage point of Kairos Palestine, who are our sisters and brothers. They appeal to us as a worldwide Christian community, and to all the countries of the world, to do what we can to stop the collective punishment that the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) is meting out to civilians in Gaza. Their appeal speaks directly to our hearts, since it reminds us of the painful discrimination and oppression we had to endure under apartheid.

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The violence perpetrated in this conflict since 7 October is horrific. We lament and condemn the way in which Hamas soldiers attacked Israeli civilians on 7 October, which led to the death of 1,400 people, injury to hundreds more, and the abduction of more than 200 hostages. We lament and condemn the massive military campaign that the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) has launched against Gaza in response, with the stated aim of “destroying Hamas”. In the past month, they have killed more than 11,000 Palestinian civilians in Gaza and wounded more than 29,000. The aerial bombardment and ground invasion of the IDF has destroyed 45% of Palestinian homes in Gaza, rendering around 1,5 million people homeless refugees.

The Israeli attacks on Gaza have not only destroyed (or damaged) homes but also schools, hospitals, mosques and churches, making any normal community life impossible. The large number of women and children who have been killed, and the fact that not nearly enough aid in the form of food, water, medication and fuel is allowed to enter Gaza, makes this a human catastrophe of enormous proportions. Most of the hospitals in Gaza are struggling to stay open or have already closed, due to the bombardments and the lack of water, electricity and medication.

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

The nature and causes of the conflict are many and complex, going back to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which the British government made a commitment to Jews that flatly contradicted the commitments it had made to the Arab leaders of the region in the aftermath of World War I. The Declaration, just 67 words long, was addressed to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the Zionist movement among British Jews:

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet. His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country (in Shlaim 2010:4).

Arab nationalist leaders were horrified at the Declaration, since it “was made by an English foreigner who had no ownership of Palestine to a foreign Jew who had no right to it” (Shlaim 2010:8). In 1917 the population of Palestine consisted of around 60,000 Jews (9%) and 670,000 Palestinians (91%), but the British Empire took the daring step to promise the Jews a “national home” within it, viewing the Arab majority (in typical colonial fashion) from the perspective of the Jewish minority, by not calling them Palestinian or Arab, but “non-Jewish”! That colonial decision of the British Empire created a political problem of two competing nationalisms in one small country, which proved unstable from the start. The competition got steadily more intense as the 20th century progressed, especially after the Nazi Holocaust and the formal approval of the State of Israel by the United Nations (UN) in November 1947,

which led to large scale Jewish immigration into Israel. The UN resolution approved the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state with proposed borders, but since the Palestinians did not accept that, war broke out immediately. The Israelis managed to defeat the resistance of the Palestinians and of neighbouring Arab states, expand those borders quite significantly.

It was a hugely destructive war of occupation, which is called the nakba (catastrophe) by Palestinians. Between 1947 and 1949, at least 750,000 Palestinians from a population of 1,9 million were made refugees beyond the borders of the new state and have not been allowed to return. The Israeli forces occupied almost 80% of historic Palestine, ethnically cleansed and destroyed about 530 villages and cities, and killed about 15,000 Palestinians in a series of massacres. Around 430,000 more Palestinians were internally displaced within the borders of the new state and fled to refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank, which have become their permanent homes.

Since 1948 the Israeli state established itself, with large and consistent financial support from the USA and Europe, to become a regional superpower with a large army and a strong economy. The Palestinians did not accept the partition of Palestine, holding to a policy of liberating all of it from the Israeli occupation. For that reason, no parallel Palestinian state was constituted, and due to the strength of the Israeli army, the guerrilla activities of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), led by Yasser Arafat, could not succeed in a military victory. Israel used that vacuum to destabilise Palestinian communities economically and politically, treating them like colonised subjects without any rights in Israel. In 1967, in the Six Days War, Israel further expanded its borders and (contrary to international law) started building homes for Jewish settlers all over the occupied areas, making it increasingly difficult for a viable Palestinian state to be established.

There have been attempts at implementing a two-state solution, like the Oslo Accord of 1993, envisaging an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, but the negotiations kept on breaking down. One reason is that the policies of Likud, the political party of Benjamin Netanyahu, and of other far-right Jewish parties now in government with him, do not support the existence of an independent Palestinian state. They keep on obstructing the negotiations, but there have also been obstacles from the side of Palestinian politicians. As a result, Palestinians are exposed to constant security surveillance and the encroachment of Israeli settlements, living without political rights. Due to living decades in a political vacuum and exposed to constant pressure from the Israeli state, many young Palestinians have become radicalised politically and have opted for military opposition to Israel, having given up hope for a political solution. The effect of this is that Israel has increasingly become a security state, in which Palestinians live without legal rights and protections. In this situation Israel is the de facto political and military authority, which – in its treatment of Palestinians – can only be described as an Apartheid state.

It isn't possible to include more details of the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians, but there is a list of publications below for anyone who wishes to explore this situation (and its history) in greater detail. To conclude this section on the origin and nature of the present war on Gaza, we quote from a recent statement by Kairos Palestine, in which they explain its root causes as:

the permanent state of terror that we Palestinians live in daily from the rule and tyranny of the Israeli occupation army, and the absolute insistence by successive Israeli governments, especially this government, that there is no Palestinian state, and that the Palestinian people have no right to self-determination. And all the consequences that arise from that.



In other words, the present flare-up of violence is a continuation – and a serious escalation – of the political conflict that started in 1917 and that became a full-blown military conflict since 1947. What is clear is that the attacks flaring up from both sides have created deeply entrenched mutual distrust and hatred. It has produced a cycle of retaliation that is becoming increasingly intense and that could spiral completely out of control.

WHAT DO WE SAY ABOUT THIS AS A CHURCH?

Political parties, NGOs and governments all over the world have made statements on the recent violence of Hamas and the IDF, on the basis of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. We express our agreement with those statements, but we also look at the conflict through the lenses of Scripture and the Reformed tradition, and wish to add the following:

A time for war?

Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu justified the present war on Gaza as follows in a press conference: “The Bible says: ‘There is a time for war, and a time for peace’. And this is a time for war”. It is always dangerous when political leaders start quoting Scripture, but it shows how political Zionism has succeeded in capturing the Bible. When the tempter started quoting the Bible (“It is written”), Jesus responded: “It is also written” (Matthew 3:7). So we wish to say that the Bible also says that the LORD hates “hands that shed innocent blood” (Proverbs 6:17). The State of Israel may be able to justify its declaration of war on Hamas on military or security grounds, but it is surely blasphemous to invoke the name God to justify the wholesale bombardment of homes, refugee camps, schools, mosques, churches and hospitals, which has caused the death of more than 11,000 Palestinian civilians and the wounding of more than 29,000, while besieging Gaza and preventing adequate aid to enter. This is more than a military operation to “crush Hamas”; it is collective punishment of all Palestinians in Gaza and amounts to genocide. The instruction to the inhabitants of the northern part of Gaza to move to the south is reminiscent of the forced displacement of Palestinians during the nakba of 1947-1949 and is an exercise in ethnic cleansing. Those displaced refugees who manage to survive the war have absolutely no guarantee that Israel will ever allow them to return to their homes. Even if this is a time for war, such military actions cannot be justified in the name of the God of Abraham, who welcomed strangers and prayed for the preservation of unjust Sodom.

Revenge and retaliation?

The scale and brutality of the IDF's present war on Gaza are unjustifiable and totally out of proportion as a response to the Hamas attack on 7 October. The punishment prescribed to ensure justice in the Hebrew Bible is “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, ...” (Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:17-20; Deuteronomy 19:21). That instruction of the Torah was intended to ensure proportionality in the response to evil, by placing a limit on revenge attacks in the tribal warfare of the ancient near East, where retaliation often echoed the boast of Lamech: “I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold” (Genesis 4:23-24). Since Prime Minister Netanyahu quoted the Bible to justify this war, we call on him and the IDF to abandon the way of Lamech and to return to the way of the Torah, by immediately ceasing its bombardment and invasion of Gaza. We echo the call by millions of people across the world for an immediate ceasefire by all parties, to allow health services to resume and to get food aid and other humanitarian assistance into Gaza.

The biblical People of Israel and the Zionist State of Israel

There are Christians who believe that it is the duty of the church to “stand with Israel” unconditionally, since they are the chosen covenant people of God. And then they identify the people of Israel, as presented in the Bible, with the present State of Israel, the political entity dating back to 1948. Such a move is not acceptable theologically, since the State of Israel is not based primarily on Scripture but on the ideology of Zionism, which Theodor Herzl, a Jewish journalist and political activist from Eastern Europe, started propagating in 1896. He argued that Jews would never be safe in Europe and therefore needed to find a homeland where they could establish and defend themselves. He first proposed that Uganda should be the place where such a Jewish homeland could

be founded, which means that the return to Palestine was not inherent to his political ideology. It was only later that the Zionist ideology was given a biblical rationale by some Jewish groups and linked to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Such a reading of the Bible claims that God promised the whole land of Israel to the Jews (ethnic descendants of Abraham and Sarah), that they will return to it, and that they therefore have a God-given right and duty to occupy all of it.

Such a reading of the Old Testament is unacceptable from a Reformed perspective, since we read the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament. The Old Testament passages that prophesy an end-time gathering of God’s people and a return from exile were already partly fulfilled in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, more than 500 years before the birth of Christ. In the New Testament, those prophecies of a worldwide gathering of believers are interpreted as referring to the inclusion of gentiles worldwide in the Christian church, not to a physical return of ethnic Jews to Palestine. From a Christian point of view, those Old Testament prophecies can certainly not be used to justify the military occupation of Palestinian land and the forced dispersion or oppression of Palestinian people, some of whom are Christians. The movement called Christian Zionism does precisely that, by supporting the present State of Israel unconditionally, as a matter of Christian faith. Such a view undermines the New Testament message of reconciliation between Jews and gentiles worldwide through the cross and resurrection of Christ.

In other words, we should not hesitate to criticise the policies and actions of the State of Israel, particularly towards the Palestinians. The Zionist State of Israel is not identical with the People of God and to criticise their injustices is not to be anti-Jewish (or anti-Semitic, as it is sometimes called). There are many Jews across the world who are severely critical of the policies of the State of Israel, on the basis of their understanding of human rights and their reading of the Hebrew Bible.

Where does God stand?

The Belhar Confession, a confessional document of the URCSA, states

We believe:

- that God has revealed Godself as the One who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;
- that in a world full of injustice and enmity God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged and that God calls the church to follow in this; [...]
- that the church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged;
- that in following Christ the Church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

In the light of this, members of the URCSA have no option but to stand with the victims of this war, particularly the women and children who have been wounded, displaced and traumatised. This applies to the Israeli victims of the Hamas attack on 7 October and to the hostages still held in Gaza by Hamas. But it applies particularly to the Palestinian men, women and children, who have been constantly exposed to bombardment, hunger, thirst, fear and mourning for the past month, and who do not have access to the kind of counselling support and medical care available to the Jewish victims. We conclude with the following appeal from our brothers and sisters at Kairos Palestine:

As Palestinian Christians, we also continue to find our courage and consolation in the God who dwells with those of a contrite and humble spirit (Isa 57:15). We find courage in the solidarity we receive from the crucified Christ, and we find hope in the empty tomb. We are also encouraged and empowered by the costly solidarity and support of many churches and grassroots faith movements around the world, challenging the dominance of ideologies of power and supremacy. We refuse to give in, even when our siblings abandon us. We are steadfast in our hope, resilient in our witness, and continue to be committed to the Gospel of faith, hope, and love, in the face of tyranny and darkness. “In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God’s goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land. We will see here ‘a new land’ and ‘a new human being’, capable of rising up in the spirit to

love each one of his or her brothers and sisters” (Kairos Palestine par. 10).

WHAT CAN WE AS SOUTH AFRICAN CHRISTIANS DO?

The URCSA joins the prophetic voices who call on the relevant authorities for:

- An immediate ceasefire by all parties to the conflict
- The opening of access routes into Gaza to allow aid convoys to enter
- The release of all hostages held by Hamas
- The release of all the detainees in Israeli prisons who are held without trial, especially youth
- The gathering of information to enable the investigation of war crimes
- A renewed commitment on the part of Israelis and Palestinians to find a political solution to the conflict

The URCSA joins the priestly voices who call on church members to pray for:

- healing for those who have been wounded
- comfort for those who are mourning the loss of relatives and friends
- protection and courage for those who are fleeing the violence
- perseverance for medical staff who are trying to provide care for patients
- a change of heart among the leaders on both sides of the conflict to stop the attacks
- wisdom for mediating figures negotiating behind the scenes to put pressure on the parties
- people of conscience worldwide to contribute practically to support and relief efforts

The URCSA urges congregations to join the royal actions of those who commit themselves to:

- celebrate Christmas and Epiphany this year in a subdued spirit, remembering the plight of the people in different countries across the world who are trapped in the midst of war
- “fasting” from certain luxuries and excesses this year to be able to contribute financially to relief efforts, by supporting organisations such as: The International Red Cross; Gift of the Givers; and The Palestine Children’s Relief Fund.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING:

 <p>Braverman, Mark. 2013. A wall in Jerusalem.</p>	 <p>Flapan, Simha. 1987. The birth of Israel. Myths and realities</p>	 <p>Khalidi, Rashid. 2017. The hundred year’s war on Palestine.</p>
 <p>Rogan, Eugene & Shalim, Avi (eds). 2001. The war for Palestine.</p>	 <p>Pappé, Ilan. 2007. The ethnic cleansing of Palestine.</p>	 <p>Shlaim, Avi. 2010. Israel and Palestine.</p>

MEET CAPE SYNOD PROPONENTS

The following URCSA ministerial formation candidates have been licenced at the DRC Church Stellenbosch on the 30th of November 2023 and are eligible to be called by congregations.



Meet Proponent Kholosa Blessing Gxabe who was born and raised in East London, Eastern Cape.

Contact Prop. Kholosa Gxabe at 083 773 7858 or kgxabe@gmail.com



Meet Proponent Averil Catherine Lewis-Richards who was born in Vredenburg, Western Cape.

Contact Prop. Averil at 082 945 4561 or 022 713 4487



Meet Proponent Sabrina September who was born in Saron near Porterville in the Swartland, Western Cape.

Contact Prop. September at 081 877 9913 or septembersabrina2@gmail.com



Meet Proponent Xolisa Oyiya who was born in Middleburg in the Eastern Cape.

Contact Prop. Oyiya at 084 548 3419 or xolisaoyiya27@gmail.com.



Meet Proponent Kyle Wanya Mendoor was born and raised in Moorreesburg, in the Swartland, Western Cape.

Contact Prop. Kyle Wanya Mendoor at 064 435 7759 or kylewmendoor18@gmail.com.



“Heavenly Solidarity”- Professor Daan Cloete passes on

By Rev Daniël Kuys (Emeritus)

Prof Gerhard Daniël Cloete, fondly known as Oom Daan, passed on, on Sunday 30 July 2023, at the age of 85, after a period of ill-health. Prof Daan was born on 6 of April 1938 in Lutzville on the Oliphantsriver. He started his career as a teacher at the P W de Bruin Primary School in Lambertsbaai. In 1963 Prof Daan started his theological training at the University of the Western Cape. In 1967 he was licensed as a minister in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and ordained in 1968 in the Congregation of Worcester South. In 1972 he received demission from the Congregation in order to pursue a doctorate at the Theological Academy, in Kampen in the Netherlands.

The subject of his doctoral research was, “Hemelse Solidariteit – ‘n Weg in die relasie tussen christologie en soteriologie in die Vi-erde Evangelie (Heavenly solidarity- A Path in relation between Christology and soteriology in the Forth Gospel).” In 1976 Prof Daan performed his doctoral examination and soon thereafter, started writing his doctoral dissertation. While he was finalizing his dissertation, the Curatorium of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church called him as Professor to the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). On February 1, 1980, he publicly defended his doctoral dissertation and returned the next day February 2, with his family to South Africa, to take up his teaching post. His DTh -degree was conferred on him with the highest distinction. With his doctoral research, Prof Cloete made a important and profound contribution to New Testament Theology and the understanding of the Gospel of John.

The Dutch New Testament Theologian, Dr Cees den Heyer, wrote in the 1980 Edition of the magazine of the Theological Academy, about Professor Cloete’s dissertation. Den Heyer wrote that the Gospel of John, continued to fascinate Daan Cloete. In the first chapter of his dissertation, he gives an overview of the theological views of New Testament Theologians, such as Bultman, Käsemann and Dodd. Den Heyer, wrote that, apart from the views of these theologians, Daan Cloete searched for an own and new way of understanding. Daan



Cloete, Den Heyer says, was of the opinion that the Fourth Gospel’s interpretation was too much focussed on its Christological interpretation and too less on its soteriology (redemption). In other words, the interpreters of the Gospel of John, give too much attention to a description of the person and work of Jesus, and emphasise less the redemption of the world through Jesus.

Professor Cloete was ordained in 1979 as Professor of New Testament Studies, in the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Western Cape. For nearly 25 years Prof he served at the University of the Western Cape in various capacities. During this period, apart from his academic responsibilities as Professor, he served on various committees at the University, he was also elected dean of the faculty and appointed as Acting Rector of UWC.

Nearer to the end of his career at UWC Professor Cloete experienced a deep sadness over the actions of the Regional Synod of the Cape regarding the moving of theological training from the UWC to the University of Stellenbosch. In his Autobiography, “Vrede vloei soos ‘n rivier-Oor die strome van my lewe,” he writes about this sadness. He writes, “As far as my knowledge goes, there was no opportunity with the entire URCSA Curatorium (Cape)

present where a thorough and profound discussion about this consequential issue was held and where the merits about the benefits or disadvantages of a possible move to Stellenbosch or other options could have been discussed. Mostly it was just the chairperson and secretary of the Curatorium who handled the issue. What concerns me, is that this decision was not taken rationally, with seriousness or with maturity. For me the greatest disappointment was the way the URCSA handled and guided the process.”

Pressure was put on him, directly and indirectly from within the Faculty at UWC and from outside, to move to Stellenbosch with the other lecturers, but he remained steadfast in his conviction and remained at UWC until his retirement. That was the measure of the man, Daan Cloete was.

Professor Cloete has always been a principled person. When the Rector at UWC, Professor Tyrone Pretorius paid tribute to Professor Cloete, he pointed to this character of Oom Daan. He called him amongst other things, principled, well-liked, and beloved. Pretorius hailed Prof Daan’s contribution to the successes of UWC.

As an ordained minister and member of URCSA, Professor Cloete, made a significant and lasting contribution to the Church. In his local Congregation in Bellville, he served as elder, catechism teacher and shared his valuable expertise on various issues of ministry, especially his skills in the development of liturgies. Prof Daan was an expert in sermons for children and had the rare skill of meeting children with the Word on their level. He had a great sense of humour, which he used in his sermons and also on the Synodical floor, during debates. As a member a member of the Congregation he was very supportive to his ministers. He served the broader Church through his service to various congregations in URCSA, the Synods as well as through his Ecumenical involvement. Professor Cloete was widely respected, in South Africa and abroad, as a person of integrity, sound scholarship and leadership. Professor Cloete, despite his achievements, as theologian, professor and University Administrator remained a humble servant of the Lord and a brother in Christ to his fellow believers.

