



# Presbyterian Link

## September 2013 Edition

A publication of the Uniting Presbyterian Church In Southern Africa, Communications Committee.

### FROM THE MODERATOR'S DESK...



I have now had this enormous privilege of being moderator for a year. As I told the Executive Commission I have managed, in these 52 weeks, to visit over 54 congregations and have slept in well over 60 different beds! I am loving the job, far more I am sure than I am being loved in the job! How is it that I, a fat old white "Greek", ended up playing Moderator?!

The most common question I face is, "How are you coping Rod?" I always answer, "Well", as that is the truth. The deeper truth is how many people are praying for me; I feel lifted, energized, inspired, and happy due to the ministry of these prayers and the kindness I have felt everywhere. In the whole year there have been only two occasions where I felt "tolerated" rather than "embraced", "respected for being the Mod" rather than for just being me. Not bad for a whole year.

To all who pray for me, MANY, MANY THANKS.

Never underestimate the power of prayers; your own and those for you. Prayer is still a mystery to me but Jesus prayed and He prays now for us. SO PRAY!

The Executive Commission was wonderful in many ways, and that is not to deny the weaknesses we have. Chief joys for me were the sensitive and seriousness with which we let our "consensus" model of decision making lead us through the tricky pastoral problems we faced. I felt the whole Executive was trying to honour the Holy Spirit and one another. Not once the whole week did our enemy, "racism", raise its head!

Of course, we reappointed Jerry Pillay as General Secretary for another term and with acclaim and joy. There was a marvellous testimony to him from the Dutch Reformed Church especially thanking us and The Lord Jesus for him. We Are really blessed by him. Please remember him, Sandra and the family. His diary is hectic.

Recently, I had the pleasure of dedicating three new worship buildings and sending your greetings to a fourth congregation, whose dedication I could not attend (see pgs 8-10). Three in very poor areas, one in a smart suburb. With each and all I stand amazed at the simple fact that we need each other, we rely on each other and we are part of God's family that has built into

its genes, "one another". There is just no such thing as an independent church.

At the time of writing this article, I was at the AGM of the UPWF, meeting in Newcastle. A joyous, noisy, happy occasion (see pg 6). Remember the song, "Thank God for little girls"? Well where would any church be without the sacrifice and intelligence of our women? They deserve our deep respect and love.

Enough from Rod the Mod. God bless you.

Much love, Rod.

### FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



Greetings dear friends! The Editorial Team for the Presbyterian Link has started to reflect on the Mission Priorities of the UPCSAs as accepted by the 2012 General Assembly. They are: Evangelism, Supporting the development of missional congregations, Health, Wellbeing and securing justice, Engaging in reconciliation and unity and, Stewardship. You may remember that the last edition focused on mission-

al congregations. This time we have decided to reflect on the theme of Christian Stewardship.

When we talk stewardship we often tend to think that we are talking about money. However, the biblical concept of stewardship is much more than this. It is a comprehensive focus on Time, Talents and Treasures. More significantly, it speaks about a way of life that encourages the care, concern and love for others, including all living creatures and non-living things on earth. Psalm 24: 1-2 reminds us that: "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters." This verse states quite clearly that everything belongs to God.

It is tragic today that many people live as if the earth belongs to them. We employ cowboy economics which plunders the earth and fails to secure its resources for future generations. A steward is someone who handles affairs for someone else. The expectation here is that the steward would love, care for and prosper the growth of whatever is placed in his or her custody. The fact that God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creep-

ing thing that creeps upon the earth" is not a license for human beings to do as they please. The understanding of the word 'dominion' here does not imply reckless and selfish abuse of the earth instead it is a call to love and care for the earth as God does. Our failure to do so will result in judgment where God will ask us: "What have you done to the resources I have entrusted to you?" The parable of the Talents in Matthew 25: 14 – 30 sheds some significant light on the consequences of not being a "good and faithful servant." In this story we see the different dimensions of stewardship: (1) the privilege of receiving the gift, (2) the responsibility attached to this privilege, (3) the accountability aspect and, (4) the celebration when the master is pleased by how we have used what he has given.



The Time, Talents and Treasures we have are not only intended for our wellbeing. They are given to us by God to help bless and prosper others in the name of the Lord. The resources we have at our disposal should be shared to make the people and world around us a better place reflecting the glory and love of God. Imagine giving some of your time to an ageing parent or lonely person? What difference would that make in that person's life or in your own for that matter? I know that in many years of pastoral ministry I was often blessed by visiting and caring for the elderly.

What about using your gifts, skills, and possessions to bless someone else? How about reading to someone who is blind, cutting the lawn of the elderly neighbor, offering to shop for someone who is not able to leave home, repairing the broken glass for someone who



needs help, and giving generously to the poor and needy? Recently we celebrated giving 67 minutes of your time on Mandela Day. This is precisely what life is all about; using the resources we have to bless others. When we choose to bless others we are choosing to do what God wants and calls us to do: "For I was hungry and you gave me something

to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (Mat. 25: 35-36).

Well, I seem to get carried away! The point I really want to make is that everything we have, possess and are is by the sheer grace of God. We may think that we have achieved all that we have by our own hard work and bright ideas but ultimately all things are given to us from the abundance of God's resources. Thus we are called to live responsibly, caringly, generously and lovingly as we share with others what God has shared with us. We are blessed to be a blessing! A good steward would know that someday we would have to account to God for what God has entrusted to us.

I am pleased to tell you that Stewardship is a key priority for the UPCSA as we seek to live life together in Christ in our diverse community. In this respect the goal of the stewardship programme at the level of the denomination is to contribute to renewal and the es-

tablishment of a giving, sharing, caring, just, reconciling and uniting community of the UPCSA in which all resources are managed equitably to the glory of God and in celebration of our diversity. The Assembly Stewardship Committee, convened by the Rev. Rully Ntshhe, has formulated their mission goals to support the Mission Priorities of the denomination. You can read more about it in their article by Malibongwe Gwele on page 4.

The Committee has already put in place an Action Plan to embark on programmes, activities and training to help us become stewards as God intends. As you can establish from the above, the UPCSA has embraced a holistic understanding of stewardship and not relegated it to the mere focus on "tithe" and "money".

Stewardship is about the way we live and how we manage, use, share and care for the resources that God has given us. It is the absolute realization that everything belongs to God. So God has blessed you with Time, Talents and Treasures and now the critical question is: How are you using these to bless others and the world around you? What are you doing both individually and collectively as a church in the community in which you are found? Isn't it time to stand up and be counted? May God inspire and bless you to be a blessing wherever you are!

Stay blessed! Jerry.

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## UPCSA EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

09 to 12 JULY 2013

### Stewardship in Governance

Hosted by the Presbytery of the Free State at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Beaconsfield, Kimberley

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The big day arrived and commissioners, having registered, assembled for the Opening Service of the Execu-



*Apart from a number of Presbyteries south of Kimberley, many Commissioners arrived by chartered buses.*

utive Commission. Many folks from the St Andrew's congregation and the hosting Presbytery also attended the service. Executives differ from General Assembly in that each Presbytery sends one minister and one elder as its Commissioners.

The Rev. Rod Botsis, our Moderator, set the tone of the Commission with his opening address. He placed em-

In this setting each person is afforded the opportunity to be heard.



*Registration of Commissioners.*

phasis on pleasing Jesus Christ. He discussed our motives and encouraged the Church to act in a way worthy of the gospel. There was a special atmosphere as Holy Communion was celebrated and this spirit continued throughout the whole of the Executive Commission.

The Executive began its work in earnest at NoordKaap High School. Throughout the time, reports were received from the various committees, each with their own focus on aspects of the work of the denomination. As the reports were received among the Commission-



*An Insaka Group discussing the proposals of reports.*

A number of commissioners commented on how the facilitators allowed discussion and the easy flow of ideas. Reflecting on the Insaka time, one commissioner remarked, "I really felt that I was heard."

The Insaka groups thus paved the way for Decision Sessions. Here the proposals gathered from the Insaka groups were considered and consensus sought.



*The Consensus Model in action.*

This process seems to create a more helpful space in which to discern what God is saying to the UPCSA.

An interesting highlight during the Executive was a tour of Kimberley's Big Hole. This provoked a sense of amazement at what was accomplished, given the technology at the time of this development. But it also highlighted the spirit of exploitation that pervades our country to this day. The powerful enriching themselves at the expense of the powerless.



*In session at Noord-Kaap High School.*

ers there was a spirit of cooperation and harmony.

Record Clerks ensured that the decisions were correctly recorded. Something new introduced at the Executive was an opportunity to converse with the conveners of committees specifically addressing the Mission Priorities of the UPCSA: Faith and Order, Mission and Discipleship, Stewardship and Church and Society. Commissioners were given the opportunity to ask questions reflecting the voices from the pews.

This was part of the strategy to support and develop missional congregations. It was felt by many commissioners that this innovation should be implemented at the General Assembly.

As an aid to reaching consensus, red indicated agreement while a blue card signals that further discussion was required.

Insaka groups followed the report-receiving periods. They continue to provide an informal setting in which to discuss the reports and their respective proposals.



*The Big Hole of Kimberley.*



*Members of the July 2013 UPCSA Executive Commission.*

Near the end of the Executive, a significant part of proceedings was the recognition of Retiring Ministers in a special Service. The following ministers will retire between now and the 2014 General Assembly:

The Revs. Eleanor Gaunt, G.T. Mcoteli, Geoff Jamieson, Dr. Roger Tucker and David van Duyker. The Revs. Gaunt and Mcoteli were able to be present for this occasion. The Executive Commission gave thanks to God for these servants and expressed its appreciation for their years of service and ministry.



*The Rev. G T Mcoteli*



*The Rev. Eleanor Gaunt and her husband, Prof. Trevor Gaunt.*

Another item for celebration was that the Rev. Dr Jerry Pillay was re-appointed as General Secretary for a further term.

All-in-all, the Executive was marked by a spirit of joy and optimism. As one person commented: "I have

been to several General Assemblies. This was my first Executive Commission and I experienced a new spirit of harmony and a genuine desire to work together to prepare the UPCSA for the future."

May God bless the UPCSA as it seeks to serve for his Glory!

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## **INVENTION OF A LIFE GIVING CHURCH The Responsibility is Ours (TRIO)**

Submitted by Malibongwe Gwele, Secretary of  
the, UPCSA Stewardship Committee

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In its inception, the goal of the Stewardship Committee, at denominational level, has been to contribute to renewal, the establishment of an ethos of giving, sharing, caring, justice, reconciliation and a united community of the UPCSA in which all resources are managed equitably to the glory of God and in celebration of our diversity.

The Stewardship Programme has in the past worked directly with congregations. While there are instances where Presbytery leadership and Associations at denominational level were engaged, the bulk of the Programme has been largely with congregations. Focus on congregations has had its positives and negatives. The main challenge has been about ensuring the sustainability of the message and teachings of the Programme. It appears that sharing the work of the Committee for the load to be carried by other people has been a challenge arising from a congregation-focused approach.

The Committee visited a number of congregations and received positive feedback and spinoffs as there are now a number of people in our denomination who can confidently present Stewardship workshops. In the previous financial year we planned to have the Training of Trainers Programme for an in-depth study and empowerment on Stewardship principles. We believe that our denomination cannot attain the goals highlighted above without a pool of trainers well-grounded in Stewardship Principles. We also believe our denomination cannot achieve its vision "to be a reconciled community of Christians exercising a prophetic witness to Christ" without a dedicated stewardship programme.



Moreover, if we are to support the development of missional congregations, Stewardship Programmes will remain a necessity. A missional approach enables churches to care about people meeting Jesus, the well-being of the local church, and the health of the whole church. From this foundation, missional churches are innately prone to growth, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. A missional church expresses this through the sharing and giving of resources (e.g., leadership, people-power, facilities, finances and training). Training, teaching and equipping people to be stewards and disciples is the only way one can ensure that our denomination is building and supporting missional congregations. When a church is missional, it really does change everything. But what does stewardship look like? How does a missional church raise money for its own mission? And how does it lead the congregation in missional generosity?

The concept of 'stewardship' has been conceived and transmitted throughout generations as a way of encouraging people to give money in particular, and less so their time, gifts, talents etc. In other words, there is a narrow view that has developed about what stewardship actually means. Perpetuated over time, stewardship has come to be perceived as a fundraising effort to maintain the presence of an ordained minister and to keep the building in good running order. As a result, stewardship is viewed as something that is needed only by struggling, poor congregations and not as a need where congregations are without financial challenges. This view is not consistent with the vision and the direction our denomination seeks to embark upon. We need to instil a new mind-set which will enable us to move away from a narrow view of stewardship and look at it differently. Wright in Truscott (2010) says "Christian Stewardship has changed and grown. It is no longer just about planned giving: it is a much broader and richer vision of glad and grateful response to God for all his creation. It is a responsible use of our many blessings, material and spiritual." Wright goes on to say, "It is not so much a means of keeping the wolf from the door of the church, as an opportunity to re-view the whole life and ethos of the church... It is no longer some special and separate activity but stewardship of all resources practised by Christians". These insights from Wright might need some consideration for a creative way of understanding stewardship and developing a new attitude different from the narrow views we might have had about stewardship.

Pentz states that "encouraging stewardship is one of the most demanding and rewarding dimensions of pastoral leadership. Stewardship enables the church to perform its ministries of worship, evangelism, fellowship, nurturing and service. It provides the church re-

sources to touch lives with the gospel both inside and outside the church. Most of all, stewardship is a way for Christians to grow in grace".

Stewardship therefore, does not denote something one does by giving money, time, and talent to the church, but it is more than that. It expresses our distinctive Christian identity — who we are and whose we are. Therefore it is not only about 'responsible giving' as it is commonly known but 'responsible living' Flowing from this understanding, the Stewardship Programme has identified, among other things, the following mission goals to attain its Vision and to support the Mission Priorities of the denomination:

- To advocate for equitable sharing of resources.
- To prepare and develop church leadership and stewards to be able to handle stewardship programmes (leadership development).
- To empower, support and strengthen congregations for growth and sustainable ministry.
- Promote healing, reconciliation, and justice in our church.
- To contribute to church growth and development.
- To create greater awareness about issues such as ecology, environment and climate change.

#### References

Truscott J, (2010) Understanding stewardship A basis for Christian teaching  
 Berkley, J.D., (2007) Leadership handbook of Management and Administration.  
 Dietterich, P. M. (1996) Cultivating Stewardship Communities: Living in the household of God

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## STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL MY STORY.

By Silvia Octaviano, a Brazilian Missionary living in  
Cape Town, South Africa



I realized I could be a missionary the moment I understood what Jesus' sacrifice – His salvation and His Lordship – had meant in my life. I was 11 years old and from that moment on I was sure that whatever I would become, it would be to glorify God, to love my neighbour and to serve Jesus. Since then some of my plans have turned out completely different from what I antici-

pated, but I don't doubt God's sovereign plans are far more perfect than I could ever have dreamt.

I had worked as a PR and journalist in Brazil for more than two decades before I decided I would look at being more qualified to serve the Church. Going into missionary training for 2 years was not an easy decision as it meant giving up a monthly salary and starting to depend on limited and, at times, uncertain financial contributions; raising a child on my own, and having no family involved. But I was never so secure in my life!

The end of the specific training was just the beginning of the real test: would I really want to be a missionary? After all, what I had to face now was a long process to join the Brazilian Presbyterian Cross-cultural Missionary Agency (APMT, in Portuguese).

APMT takes mission work seriously. It seeks the approval and constant monitoring of the local church, and also requires each missionary to undergo several interviews and training courses. In addition, they are to raise sufficient financial support among churches and associates before going into the field. God, in His grace, made it possible for us in 7 years. In January 2008 my 13 year old teenage daughter Laura and I ar-



*Silvia with her daughter, Laura, who has just left Cape Town to study Mandarin in China.*

rived in Cape Town. Kenilworth Community Presbyterian Church (KCPC) was our new home church – and God knows how much we loved it from that first moment! I believe the multi ethnicity there may give us a little taste of heaven and the warm welcome we received is still there for all who arrive. KCPC was running the C-Step (Christian Social Transformation and Empowerment Programme for Dignity) and I came to join the team.

My biggest challenge was the English language. Nothing is crueller than a situation where a poor grasp of a language forces one to be silent with one's thoughts and opinions, bursting to contribute and participate in some way! I have learnt much and finally I am able to comprehend the language. So English is no longer the biggest barrier.

Besides supporting children from disadvantaged families from the congregation through the C-Step programme (payment of school fees, transport, clothing and snacks for school), KCPC has offered basic courses: computer skills, sewing, fabric painting and music. We are in the process of offering basic Xhosa, Portuguese and French language courses from the second semester of 2013.

As we see it, C-Step creates the opportunity for people to develop and have a taste of how Jesus can make difference in our lives. Sharing the Gospel is our ultimate goal.

Then we have relationships to concern ourselves with. Why is it that other cultures seem to differ so much in many "important" matters? Perhaps those matters are more peripheral than we thought? Anyway, I believe we have to learn to deal with whatever comes up in a sensible, Biblical way, building up the body of Christ as one and ensuring that Jesus' love is what binds us together. There is certainly another big challenge here!

I count myself very privileged to work with KCPC in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. I am also very grateful to God for the transformational work he continues to do in me as I serve as a missionary. I pray that my life and love can impact the lives of others.

May God give us all a burning heart for the ministry of reconciliation we have been entrusted with.

*If you would like to contact Silvia, her email address is: [sil\\_brz@hotmail.com](mailto:sil_brz@hotmail.com)*



**Agência Presbiteriana de Missões Transculturais**

#### WHO OR WHAT IS APMT?

If you missed Silvia's story, APMT stands for *Agência Presbiteriana de Missões Transculturais*. It is Portuguese for "Presbyterian Agency for Cross-Cultural Missions". APMT is one of a number of missionary departments of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil).

APMT's vision is to strategically proclaim the Gospel of Christ, in faithful response to Scripture. Its aim is to see the Kingdom of God proclaimed in cross-cultural fields. APMT's mission is to educate, mobilize, train and send Brazilian Christians who believe they are called into this ministry, namely to preach the Gospel and propagate the Reformed faith inside and outside of Brazil; being sensitive to the cultural peculiarities of each nation or ethnic group.

In Cape Town a hub has been established to provide APMT's missionaries with a place to learn rudimentary English for at least one year. From there, they progress to their missionary destination. However, APMT would like



to expand their capabilities by establishing projects in other parts of South Africa. They have numerous missionaries with various skills who would love to come and serve in a local congregation, while learning English. They do not require payment or accommodation as their stay would be funded from their home church/es. Of course, if a local church wished to assist financially or otherwise, this would be welcomed. If you would like to partner with APMT by hosting missionaries, please contact:

The Rev. Gessé Rios at [gessrios@gmail.com](mailto:gessrios@gmail.com) OR

Kenilworth Community Presbyterian Church at: [office@kenilworth-presbyterian.org.za](mailto:office@kenilworth-presbyterian.org.za)

## UNITING PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP (UPWF) AGM

Newcastle.

A time of great celebration!



The Moderator at the reception dinner.



Mrs Mokgadi Nemauxhwe, wife of the Rev. Awedzane Nemauxhwe.



Four of our women in ministry attending the UPWF.



The team who feeds 16 schools in Newcastle and a volunteer (right), clearly showing her colours!



## THANKSGIVING AND STEWARDSHIP A Psalm of Thanksgiving

By Douglas Bax

Many of the psalms in the Bible are psalms of thanksgiving. One instance is Ps. 116. This psalm begins,

*I love the Lord, because he has heard my call and my pleas for mercy. Because he bent his ear to hear me, I will call on him as long as I live.*

The psalmist speaks of how sick he was. "The snares of death" seemed to surround him on every side; the very "pangs of Hades" seemed to have grasped hold of him, plunging him into anguish of mind and soul as well as bodily pain. But, he testifies,

*Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I pray, save my life!"*

He goes on to think of how God answered his prayer and bursts into song:

*Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the simple-hearted: when I was brought down, he saved me. My heart, be at peace again, for the Lord has been good to you.*

Then, turning to speak directly to God, he prays:

*For you have rescued me from death, my eyes from weeping, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living. my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I walk before the Lord in the land of the living, I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted."*

We must not misinterpret these last two lines as though the psalmist is boasting or claiming that God heard his prayer because he kept his faith. Rather we must understand him as giving thanks to God that he

managed to keep his faith even when, humanly speaking, he was in such extreme circumstances and under so much pressure to despair.

### Our Thanksgiving

We too owe so much to the Lord. In the first place for life itself, and then for the very air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the ability to work and play, our jobs, our income, our homes, our families, our friends....

Like the psalmist we too have been sick and have recovered and found ourselves once more walking "in the land of the living". We have wept and found our tears dried. We have stumbled and been lifted up. We too have plunged into doubt, and yet found that when we could no longer hold on to God, he still held onto us.

Indeed, to adapt the psalmist's words, we can sing, "When I was brought down by sin, he saved me." By grace God has rescued us from the snares of death and the grasp of hell through Jesus Christ, who died for us and rose again to put us right with God.

How much we too then should burst into singing the praises of God for all God's goodness! Who that has known the grace of God in Jesus Christ cannot but be filled with gratitude towards him?

### Words and Works

The psalmist realizes, however, that, important as they are, words of praise and thanksgiving are not enough. Words by themselves are not enough, because words can be cheap. We need to show our gratitude to God with more than words. So he asks "How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?" As another psalm puts it, "What then shall we render to the Lord for all his goodness to us?"

That is a question we all need to ask for ourselves.

The psalmist answers it by saying,

*I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfil my vows to the Lord...I will offer you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord.*

This he will do, he says, "in the house of the Lord". So how do we say thank you to God in church? In three ways:

- a) by our hymns of praise and thanksgiving;
- b) by our prayers of thanksgiving; and
- c) by our offering of money.

Sometimes people suggest that we should not take up offerings in the church. They feel that an appeal for money contaminates our worship or that the money defiles the sacred building. But that is not a biblical attitude. The Bible is not so "spiritual"; it is concerned with the things of the world. Jesus actually preached about money much more than he did about prayer. For, as he pointed out, what we do with our money determines which master we really serve (Matt. 6:24). Thus when he saw the people putting money into the great collection box for the Temple, he did not say that that was wrong. He commended the widow for giving as generously as she could.

At the same time the prophets and Jesus and the New Testament are all actually concerned more with how we spend our money outside church than inside it! They are more concerned with how much people give

to help the poor than to the Temple!

### Conclusion

A waitress was working in a restaurant and after the bill had been paid at a table she had served, she returned and said to those sitting at the table: "Didn't you enjoy the meal?" The man who paid the bill said, "Yes, thank you, we did very much. But why do you ask?" "Well, she said, "you gave me no tip, so I thought perhaps you did not find it very good!"

We should never just tip God, as it were, or give him the loose change that we happen to have in our pockets. God does much more for us than just serve us a meal! But the story is relevant in that it illustrates that how much we give indicates how grateful we are. We must, like the Psalmist, make a sacrificial offering.

Indeed in the end all our money is not enough. As Everett Fullam says, "God does not want your money unless you are willing to give him your life!"

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## **CELEBRATING NEW CHURCHES! The Stewardship of Church Planting**

The following churches were dedicated to the glory of God very recently and we celebrate with them in what the Lord has done!

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### **Parkside Presbyterian Church, East London**



*Congregants of Parkside in worship.*



*The Rev. Qina, minister at Parkside Presbyterian Church*



*The Moderator greeting Parkside Sunday School children.*

**Protea Valley Church, Durbanville, Cape Town**  
 Dedicated on 21 July 2013



*A view of Protea Valley Church from the Parking lot.*



*Rev. Russell preaches & a young member listens intently.*



*Protea Valley Church's dedication service.*

*The Reason the Local Church Exists*

*"...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt 28:18-20*

*There are three parts to Jesus' command:*

- 1) Go and make disciples. A disciple is a student or follower. Making disciples means conversion. We are commanded to tell people the good news so that rebellious sinners who respond to the message become repentant sinners for whom Jesus is Lord.*
- 2) Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*
- 3) Teach them to obey everything. This will take a long time. This is the process of growing in Christ-likeness throughout one's life.*

*When you put these three tasks together, the reason why the church exists is simple: By the power of the Holy Spirit, to preach the gospel, bring people into the family, and grow them to maturity in Christ.*

**William Mpamba Memorial Church, Solomondale.** Unfortunately, No pictures could be obtained at the time of publishing.

**St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Constantia, Kroonstad** New building dedicated on 12 May 2013



*The Moderator presides at the unveiling of the stone.*



*The congregation at Kroonstad..*

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## MAYFAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Celebrating 120 years of Ministry

30 August 2013

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#### Introduction

The Rev Calvin Naidoo was called to the Mayfair congregation on 1st May 1995. Nobody knew exactly how old the church/congregation was. This was due to the relocation of the church from Fordsburg (Mint Road) to the suburb of Mayfair. Some of my predecessors attempted an investigation into the background of the church, but information was difficult to come by. In November 1995, much information came to light through the central office archives, the Wits University and discussions with many members who left.

#### Fordsburg

The earliest records of the then Fordsburg Presbyterian Church dates to the 24th November 1893, the work started in August of the same year. The Rev W Gordon Lawrence was appointed as Acting Minister by the Presbytery and on the 11th March 1894, he was inducted as minister of the Church, but in July, the same year, he resigned and returned to Scotland. The venue for services at this time was unknown.

The Rev Andrew Brown, who resigned from his charge in Scotland, came to Fordsburg in 1895. He was inducted to a cause rather than a congregation on the 31st October 1895. Services were then held in the Masonic Hall in Fordsburg. A site was secured for £125.00 in Mint Road, Fordsburg. The architect was Mr. GC Fleming and the contractor Mr. AA Elliott. The foundation stone was laid by Mr. JL van der Merwe – a commissioner of the mines under the South African Republic – who was a fellow student of the Rev A Brown in Edinburgh. The building was completed and on 23rd April 1897 dedicated by the Rev James Gray.

In January 1904 a manse was built. Both the church and manse were financed by the generosity of friends, firms, mining companies and by the hard work of the ladies in the community, who held bazaars and other fund raising projects. (Rev A Allan "Souvenir Booklet").

#### The Move to Mayfair



During the 1920's there was great commotion and upheaval in the area. There were labour wars which also become political and were fought by miners. The labour relations between the white and black miners under the then Smut's government created a major problem for years and Fordsburg become a battlefield.

Fordsburg being a small residential suburb started to become commercial in nature and this affected the church. People started to move out of the area to new suburbs. Many of the church members were from the Mayfair area. All these happenings/problems therefore contributed to the move of the church from Fordsburg to Mayfair, which is a distance of about 3 kms.

A site was secured in 9th Ave and the building commenced after a buyer was secured to purchase the Fordsburg Buildings. (The Fordsburg Building still stands on Mint Road, with a foundation stone on it. The building is now used as warehouse and supermarket.)



*Mayfair Presbyterian Church members in worship.*

In Mayfair the building was completed and on the 30th July 1932, it was dedicated by the Rev. A Brown with a foundation stone. The membership was about 250. Many years later the Mayfair Church was sold and a new manse was purchased at Crosby, which is the still the manse today.

During the mid 1980s, Mayfair, a predominantly white area, became very rough and violent, with many gang-fights and murders. Consequently, many of the whites started moving out of the area. Their homes were bought by folk from the Indian community, which was predominantly Muslim. They moved in in large numbers. The closing down of the mines also contributed to the whites moving to where jobs were more readily available. Mayfair's membership therefore dwindled to about 100 members and the church was without a minister for about 5 years. Today, in 2013, under the ministry of the Rev. Calvin Naidoo, the congregation is now multiracial with a membership of 65 people.

We give thanks for the faithful witness of this congregation. They have remained while many churches have either closed down or been sold and are used by other faith-groups.

## BACK TO BASICS

### Stewardship of Church Growth

A Conference offered by the Mission and Discipleship Committee, 09-11 September 2013

The conference has the potential to revolutionise the way we “do church”. More than 100 Presbyterians made their way to eMseni Centre in Kempton Park to attend workshops aimed at how the church can move forward and become mission-minded by going “back to basics”.

Setting the tone for the conference, Dr. Marius Nel spoke on how churches have lost their relevance. A powerful image shared was that of maintaining a bridge which no longer spanned the river it was constructed for, since an event had changed the course of the river. Marius also made reference to Acts 4:13 where the Pharisees refer to the disciples as “unschooled ordinary men” and the fact that



*Marius Nel.*



*Back to Basics worship time.*

the word used in the Greek is ἰδιώτης [idiotes] which means unqualified or inexperienced. Coupled with this was the problem of how unwieldy church management structures inhibit new ministry needs. Nowadays, the trend has been to allow informal ministry groups to function. A potential problem with this strategy is that, should the leader burn out or move away, without a formal structure to support it, the ministry collapses.

There were both structured as well as ad-hoc workshops:

- ◆ Rod Botsis and Mukondi Ramulondi discussed Effective Preaching and methods to be both effective with good content.
- ◆ Jaco Bester defined leadership, the need for leaders to embrace the constant change and for the minister to empower those working with him/her.
- ◆ Dr Inette Taylor, a counselling psychologist ran a practical workshop on ministering to trauma victims, including ways of protecting oneself from being affected by the emotional weight of the trauma.
- ◆ Training is a key to effective ministry and one of the



*Jaco Bester.*

ways could be by means of training courses. Chris Judelsohn and Craig Smith detailed the ways to ensure that the courses were both relevant and effective.



*Awedzani Nemaikwe.*

- ◆ As explained by John McKane and Theo Groeneveld, good administration systems are needed, both to provide confidence in the leadership as well as to meet legal requirements. In addition a church needs good records to be able to respond rapidly to a crisis or need of any family. Love is attention to detail and good administration helps us to care.
- ◆ Awedzani Nemaikwe covered the vital aspect of how a congregation can only flourish if there is a healthy relationship between the minister, elders and the rest of the congregation.

On Tuesday the members were introduced to “Open Space Technology.” We were asked “How do we inspire, equip and motivate our congregations for the Great Commission?” People were asked to put their

ideas on paper and workshops were organised around these ideas. Although a lot of internal issues were raised, there were a few outward looking workshops that were organised.



*Praying for one another.*

In the final session people spoke very warmly about the conference’s impact on them. Here are some of the observations:

- ◆ We are part of a bigger story.
- ◆ Horror of the thought of bridges over dry river beds and the wonder of the Kingdom “breaking through”
- ◆ The Order of Supportive Lay Ministries concept that was presented and discussed.
- ◆ The wonderful gap-filling that happened in interactions.
- ◆ People were blown away by how much had been learned.
- ◆ The church needs more “idiotes!” Hallelujah!
- ◆ People were impressed at the Overall quality of the work that has gone into the conference.

The seeds have been sown. We believe that this will have a ripple effect through the denomination as people go back to their local congregations and Presbyteries. We look forward to the next conference to align us further to the Great Commission.

For a more detailed account and other info, visit: <http://upcsa-mad.org.za/2013/09/whatta-conference/>

## ST JOHN'S GOWRIE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

### Stewardship in Training

By the Rev. Dennis de Stadler

For some time now the Lord has been laying on our hearts a need for a "House of Retreat and Prayer for All Nations." (Isaiah 56:7) The concept behind this "house" is for groups of Christians to "come apart a while" and meet over weekends for training, encouragement and fellowship.

My conviction for this kind of "House of Prayer" comes from a number of impressions and perceptions:

- ◆ A need, I believe, exists in the church for "spiritual fathers" or mentors. Very few ministers and pastors are able to share their deepest needs and desires with any Christian in their congregations, because of a fear of a lack of confidentiality. If it is true that a "problem shared is a problem halved," then we need to make facilities available for pastors young and old to do just that.
- ◆ Having served on commissions and having been in discussion with pastors, it is my firm view that there is an almost complete dearth of any kind of training taking place in our congregations. Not every pastor has the time, or indeed, the gifting to adequately train his elders and leaders. The end result is that we have leadership in our congregations which has little or no idea as to the way Jesus would lead – and indeed what the demands of the UPCS Manual are.
- ◆ The family that prays together stays together! In my experience, any kind of *koinonia* outside of the normal run of church affairs creates lasting and deepening relationships. Those of you who have been on pilgrimages to the Holy Land or have walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain will be able to attest to this truth.

- ◆ In our busy congregational and domestic lives we need, desperately, to find solace and peace; especially in the company of fellow Believers. For example, ministers should be taking a weekend off every two months and I know that there are many who do not make use of those "constitutional" opportunities to "get away from it all."



So... what are we suggesting?

Initially, during 2013 we are offering one weekend a month from August through to November. These weekends will concentrate, depending on demand, almost ex-

clusively on "Training for Leadership, Jesus Style."

We have been blessed by being offered the use, of the Mountain View Country House by Kevin and Carol Sacke at nominal weekend rates. The house is situated on the Mooi River within

spitting distance of the N3 from Durban and Johannesburg (via Mooiriver or Nottingham Road) and has wonderful



views of the 'Berg, even in winter. Initially we will only be able to house 19 people on site, but we do have use of other accommodation within a kilometre or so of Mountain View. The beauty of Mountain View is that the apartments can accommodate men, women, or couples, and are self-catering. This allows us to keep the prices low and only Saturday Lunch and Sunday Lunch will be provided as part of the deal. Carol and Kevin have purposely kept their costs to a minimum (R300 per person for the weekend), because they believe that Mountain View is to be used for the Lord's People. Ideally we would have groups no bigger than about 25 for each weekend event.

We are glad that the St Gowrie's congregation can offer this ministry. For further details, please contact Dennis de Stadler. Moderator, St John's Gowrie  
Tel: 033 266 6122. Email: [decolores@bundunet.com](mailto:decolores@bundunet.com)

#### SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

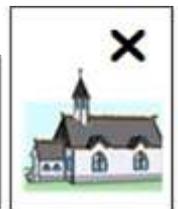
Our new UPCS website is going to go "live" soon. In the meanwhile you can help. We would really appreciate you visiting the following link: <http://unitingpresbyterian.org/congregations/findcongregations/>

You will be able to find your congregation and its contact details by using the search tool.

Please help us by checking the details and reporting any changes that need to be made.

Contact Mike at [lomic@mweb.co.za](mailto:lomic@mweb.co.za). Other details we would like to receive from you are:

- Your service and midweek meeting times
- A photo of your church so that it can be loaded (300 pixels wide x 200 pixels high)



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