

Pretoria University and Valedictory Service

October 2012

Pretoria University is the primary theological institution of the UPCSA. The UPCSA has entered into a Partnership agreement with the University whereby our selected candidates who are sent to Pretoria are taught at the University's Faculty of Theology. Furthermore, depending on the number of UPCSA students registered at the Faculty a proportionate number of lecturing posts are allocated to the UPCSA. At the moment the UPCSA has one official UPCSA position at the University filled by Prof. Graham Duncan who teaches Church History. We are fortunate that the University has made two other appointments of UPCSA ministers apart from the Partnership Agreement, namely: Prof Maake Masango for Pastoral Theology and Dr. Vuyani Vellem in Dogmatics and Ethics. In addition to the UPCSA the other partner churches at present are the Dutch Reformed Church, the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk and Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa. The University is open to considering additional partnerships.

We presently (2012) have six UPCSA official ministry students studying at the Faculty. Three of these students are completing their basic academic studies at the end of 2012 and will become Probationers in 2013. In addition to the students attending formal lectures, polity classes organized by the UPCSA's Ministry Secretary also take place. The focus of the Polity class in 2012 has been on the developing of spiritual qualities in parallel to academic progress. Henri Nouwen's book *"The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life"* has been used as resource material from which topics such as Solitude, What is Prayer, Listening, Discipline, Forgiveness, Community and Hindrances have been dealt with. The discussions on these topics have been handled by our three academic staff members as well as the Ministry Secretary (Eddie Germiquet) and Rev Gary Sinclair, the Chaplain to the students.



Eddie Germiquet discussing the importance of understanding and practicing "solitude" in one's Christian walk, with ministry students at Pretoria University.

Valedictory Service

Every year a Valedictory Service is held in one of the Churches represented by graduating students at the Faculty. On Sunday 21st Oct. 2012 the Valedictory Service was held at Hlanganani Congregation in Chiawelo (Soweto), a congregation belonging to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of South Africa (EPCSA), who have eight students at the Faculty.

The service was conducted by Rev Gicks Moyane of the EPC. A special feature of this service is the “Foot Washing” of departing students, done by representatives of the Faculty. This year the Dean of the Faculty, Prof Johan Buitendag as well as the Vice Dean, Prof Danie Human shared the act of washing the feet of the departing students. The Moderator of the EPC, Rt. Rev. Masango preached the sermon from John 13, on the lessons the disciples had to learn as Jesus washed their feet. The central significance of this act is to remind the candidates that as they go out to minister they are sent out by Jesus to serve His people. Rev Masango cautioned all candidates for the ministry against thinking of themselves as “masters of all that they survey”. He also reminded the congregants not to allow ministers to develop such inflated opinions of themselves.



From L to R: A visiting Professor from Germany; Johan Buitendag (Dean); Danie Human (Vice Dean); Rev Masango (Moderator EPC) and Rev Moyane in the pulpit leading the service, all standing in front of the large congregation.

Greetings were brought from a number of partner churches including the Dean of the Faculty. Rev Portia Khosa, herself a recent graduate of the Faculty gave an amusing portrait of each of the dozen or so departing students. Rev Vuyani Vellem brought the service to a close by conducting the Sacrament of Holy Communion. In true African style the service lasted from 9am to 2pm, but somehow the time never seemed to drag!

Thereafter, a delicious meal was served to all who wished to partake.

The three UPCSA graduating students from Pretoria are Bulelani Thupa; Bongwiwe Ngebulana and Sandisele Xinti.



Bulelani Thupa having his feet washed by Johan Buitendag (Dean)



Bongiwe's feet washed by Danie Human (Vice Dean)



Sandisele' turn to see how it's done!

The occasion had special significance for the Ministry Secretary as his own father had been a minister of the EPC, and as a holiday job in the 1970's, Eddie Germiquet (then still a student) was tasked by his father to build all the rafters for the then Chiawelo Church (now the church hall). A quick inspection by Eddie of the church hall on 21st Oct. 2012 revealed that the roof was still intact!

Eddie Germiquet (Ministry Secretary- UPCSA)