

COMMITTEE CONVENERS' CONSULTATION

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

23rd and 24th AUGUST 2012: LUMKO RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES:

The following Committee Conveners and support were in attendance:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Committee represented</i>
1. Rt Rev R Botsis	Moderator
2. Rev S Loni	Assembly Business Committee
3. Rev L Mshumpela	Church Associations
4. Rev T Chemvumi	Church and Society
5. Rev M Muller	Communications
6. Rev C Leeuw	Court of Assembly and AARP
7. Rev Prof J Pillay	Gensec/Ecumenical Relationships
8. Rev Dr M Young	Education and Training
9. Rev N Meyer	Faith and Order
10. D Anderson	Finance Committee
11. Rev A Nemauxhwe	Ministry
12. Rev Dr G Marchinkowski	Mission and Discipleship
13. Rev Z Rashe	Nominations
14. Rev B Gaborone	Priorities and Resources
15. Rev RZ Notshe	Stewardship
16. T Coulter	Clerk of Assembly
17. B Hills	External Consultant
18. G Jooste	Chief Financial Officer
19. J Botha	Admin

Apologies:

The Rev Prof M Masango of the Church Office Committee

WELCOME:

The Gensec welcomed all those present and encouraged everyone to make full use of the two days to take their respective committees forward and help the UPCSA grow to another level.

WORSHIP AND OPENING DEVOTIONS:

- i The Moderator opened the meeting in prayer and led the devotions.
- ii The Moderator preached from 2 Cor:5 on the theme of reconciliation and not receiving God's grace in vain.
- iii The Moderator covered the following points:
 - 📖 We need to stop and ask why we are doing this and if it is because we want to be reconciled to God.
 - 📖 Are we reconciled to Christ?
 - 📖 What motivates you to work the way you work?
 - 📖 Does the love of Christ compel you to do it?
 - 📖 Are we ruled by Christ's love and not just the task?
 - 📖 Are we only responding to the love of Christ?

SESSION 1: The new UPCSA committee structure

- i The Gensec congratulated everyone on their appointment as Conveners within the new structure and introduced the first session.
- ii Gensec went through the programme for the two days.
- iii He went through the contents of the Conveners' tool kit and explained that everyone could use this to keep minutes of meetings and encouraged them to see it as a resource to be passed on to future Conveners.
- iv All Conveners gave a brief introduction of themselves and the committee they represented.
- v The Gensec then led a session on expectations which was recorded as follows:
 - ✚ To be firmly rooted in relationships between Assembly Business Committee and other committees.
 - ✚ To be crystal clear in what we are supposed to be doing.
 - ✚ To be assisted in identifying potential candidates for committees.
 - ✚ To understand the role of committees in sustaining God's Kingdom.
 - ✚ Get a better understanding of each other so that we can all pull in a unified direction.
 - ✚ Help plan the game together and find ways of complimenting each other.
 - ✚ Ensure all in the same basket.
 - ✚ Link the work of committees to the Vision and Mission of the church.

‡ To network with other committees.

vi The Gensec covered the following under the heading **"Why the new Assembly Committee structure?"** The following points were raised:

- a) Having 66 committees in the past was proving too cumbersome.
- b) Only about 35 committees actually reported regularly to Assembly or EXCO.
- c) There was considerable overlapping of the work across committees.
- d) There was a need to combine the work of committees doing the same themes.
- e) Will allow us to be more efficient in monitoring delivery. P&R to draw up a mechanism to monitor and evaluate but doesn't exclude us from devising our own tools.
- f) It is not just business as usual or an excuse to operate in maintenance mode.
- g) We must ask the question, "What is God saying to us as a church?"
- h) We need to come to some creative answers together.
- i) The new structure will prove to be more cost effective.
- j) It will allow each committee more time at Assembly to report its work.
- k) It will allow us an opportunity to change the way we do Assembly and to look at the way committee work feeds into Assembly.
- l) We want General Assembly to be a place of inspiration as people need to be compelled to love Christ. We can now find space in the agenda to do this.
- m) We need to bring the Moderator Designate into the loop early on, well before Assembly 2014.
- n) Renewing is important for revival so will allow us to discern the way forward after having asked God what He is saying to us.
- o) There was a need to align the work of committees with the Vision and Mission of the UPCSA.
- p) We need to move the church through a process of study, research, discern, reflect and act.
- q) It was pointed out that it was the work of the committees to do the work of the church, to formulate strategies for the different operating bodies and councils and to create logistical support for congregations to do ministry.
- r) People tended to see the work of committees as purely to report to Assembly/EXCO but we need to look at ways we can serve congregations.

vii The meeting highlighted that we all exist because of congregations and we need to succeed at congregational level.

viii It was felt that as a reformed church we needed to challenge the work of the church in a relevant way and this can be done through committees.

ix It was felt that there was no need to be prescriptive in determining the way Presbytery committees should be structured.

x The Gensec pointed out that the P&R committee had been tasked with looking at the way Presbyteries function and the need to revisit structures could form part of this discussion.

xi Gensec then spent some time in a discussion on **"What a committee is and isn't?"**

- a) Gensec referred the meeting to the hand-out on the previous consultation held last year in August which was in the tool kit.
- b) He reiterated that they were not divisional or super committees and were not intended to be committees with subordinate sub committees.
- c) The need to be careful with semantics was emphasised because of the use of terms like task teams. There was a need to manage this as the need arose.
- d) The Gensec indicated that the committees would need to relook at the Terms of Reference as they were really in the transitional stage and needed to evolve over time.
- e) While they could be seen as single committees they also had multiple terms of reference.

xii The Gensec then took the meeting through the committee structure. He clarified the reference to Youth in the Mission and Discipleship Committee which was different to Youth in Associations.

xiii The Gensec drew the attention of the Conveners to section 3 in the tool kit where there was a hand-out showing work arising out of Assembly that needed to be done by committees.

xiv It was noted that committees were not allowed to co-opt members as only Assembly could appoint someone to a committee but could ask people to assist. The idea was to be creative to ensure the work was done.

xv It was noted that Ministers and Spouses Conference came under P&R.

xvi The Gensec made himself available to attend the first committee meeting to assist and facilitate, especially the 4 larger committees.

xvii It was noted that committees needed to meet at least twice before EXCO and one of those to be before the end of 2013.

xviii The Conveners were encouraged to ask Gensec questions of clarity at any time.

SESSION 2: Taking forward the new UPCSA Mission Priorities and Values

i Brendon pointed out that during his time here he had gained a flavour of the huge differences across the UPCSA.

ii He reminded everyone the New Vision, Mission, Mission Priorities and Values had been adopted at General Assembly.

iii The issue now was about delivery on the ground with a change from policy making to execution.

- iv The Conveners needed to be a collective body and not just Conveners of individual committees.
- v It was really all about creativity and community.
- vi Brendon asked everyone to read pages 1-16 of the Log Frames hand-out.
- vii Brendon referred the Conveners to section 4 in the Tool Kit where the Vision, Mission etc. were copied for easy reference.
- viii He emphasised the need to revisit the communications infrastructure as part of the implementation process.
- ix He explained that the values were really everybody's business.
- x The Conveners then broke into groups to consider the following questions:
 - ✦ What problems does the UPCSA need to solve in order to move forward?
 - ✦ What are the causes of these problems?
- xi He pointed out that the answers to these questions had serious implications for the CWM bid for funding.
- xii The following feedback on the two questions posed by Brendon was shared by the groups:

PLENARY SESSION:

Evangelism:

- a) As a Church we have no joint/shared understanding of what evangelism is therefore do not have shared values.
- b) Found that finance was a problem and evangelism was often determined by finance and therefore is not missional.
- c) Although we have budgets there is a lack of capacity therefore we are not equipped and too inward looking. The focus should be on community.
- d) We think in a way that is more Presbyterian than Christian.
- e) Our Orders stifle us and stop us from looking out of the box and going outside Presbyterianism e.g. we have abandoned the old position of evangelist and don't see them anymore because there is no provision in the Manual.
- f) Urbanisation has also affected the role of evangelists.
- g) We forget that being reformed is to learn from others.
- h) There is a lack of recognition that each individual is responsible for evangelism.

Health and well-being:

- a) There is still a problem of stigmas and discrimination.
- b) The issue of expedience is a problem as HIV/AIDS often seen as the only issue.
- c) We need to take care of the destitute within our own capabilities.

- d) We are no longer the voice of the voiceless i.e. we adopt a partisan approach.
- e) Sometimes red tape is a problem e.g. we didn't respond to Lonmin.
- f) We need to beware of other people's models not speaking to us.
- g) We need our own authentic solutions.
- h) We need a communications structure to allow us to deal with the press and to build contacts.

Reconciliation:

- a) Main issues are racism, ethnicity and tribalism.
- b) The truth has to be told in love.
- c) The patterns within the denomination are still a reflection of what is happening outside.

Missional congregations:

- a) What do we understand by the word missional and what does support imply? We need a common understanding.
- b) Ministries have been discouraged from being missional mainly because they don't have a common understanding.
- c) Congregations and Presbyteries have also become discouraged for the same reason.
- d) Associations also see themselves as missional but the church doesn't see it that way.
- e) Need to ask the question who is the church?
- f) The mission statement must be filtered down the denomination.
- g) There seems to be a sense of mistrust between congregations.
- h) We don't celebrate one another and tend to be jealous of our own positions.
- i) There is little or no sharing generally because of mistrust and people feeling "I am OK Jack".
- j) There is a tendency to forget the great commission.
- k) We are becoming a maintenance and not a making church.

Stewardship:

- a) Historical problem of being patronising because of the missionaries.
- b) There is a problem with multiple points of collection.
- c) There is a crisis of people not owning their congregation.
- d) People don't have a shared understanding of what stewardship means.
- e) Black churches determine their giving by the pledge system which is restrictive.
- f) People need to understand why they give.
- g) Church and Associations are often seen as the same.
- h) Associations need to have meaning in a new South Africa and not be anchored in the past i.e. what do we want to see in the future?
- i) Stewardship needs to cut across all committees.

SESSION 3: Key roles and responsibilities of Conveners

- i Jerry summarised the work completed during the morning and emphasised that the committees now need to be part of the implementation process of the Vision, Mission, Mission Priorities and Values.
- ii He asked the question, "If God is asking us to advance what is preventing us from fitting into God's plan for us as a church?"
- iii He emphasised the importance of alignment in the work of the committees and that problem solving must take place in the committees.
- iv He mentioned that previously we had operated on the basis of business as usual and this was no longer the case.
- v After a short discussion the Gensec summarised that:
 - a) The Committees need to determine what the mission priorities mean for us.
 - b) The idea is not to give one specific answer to a question but for each committee to answer in its own context.
 - c) We need to develop clarity as to where the church is going by allowing committees to challenge us as we discern together.
 - d) We need to measure ourselves and the values can be our yardstick.
 - e) We need to share our thoughts so everyone can see what everyone else is working towards.
 - f) The Terms of Reference should help us to build a plan of action.
 - g) We need to leave room for God to work amongst us so we can be a reconciled people.
 - h) The Vision can be seen as what and the Mission as how.
- vi Jerry then led the group in a discussion on, "**Key roles and responsibilities of Conveners.**" He drew everyone's attention to the hand-outs in the tool kit.
- vii A short brainstorm raised the following points for consideration:
 - a) To call people together.
 - b) To facilitate.
 - c) To design agendas.
 - d) To gain a sense of peoples' views.
 - e) Ensure maximum participation.
 - f) To give guidance and direction.
 - g) To give leadership.
- viii Jerry ran a short session based on a PowerPoint presentation which was handed out to everyone to include in their tool kits:
 - a) Need to meet twice a year but also need to be working in between. Budgets will be a key factor.
 - b) Need to appreciate what facilitate and manage mean.
 - c) Must use all skills in the committee and remember that it is a committee report and not the Convener's report.
 - d) Need to use different media and create a structure to allow you to communicate with other committees.

- e) Need to record conversations and not only look for decisions.
- f) Need to find ways to establish the views of congregations on the ground. The Communications Committee may need to investigate the developing of a protocol.
- g) Need to look at previous minute books.

ix **Brendon ran a session on "What does it mean to be a creative convener?"**

- a) Brendon mentioned the story of sticks in the Bible and shared the story of Ghandi and the salt as examples of being creative.
- b) He pointed out that leadership was not about great men but about being social.
- c) Brendon went through the shift model as contained in section 6 of the tool kit.
- d) He suggested that people needed to consider what changes needed to take place in them to make them effective Conveners, especially personal changes?
- e) He pointed out that:
 - 📖 We need to be the change we want to see in the world.
 - 📖 Change takes place collectively.
 - 📖 Need to look at how you can change actual behaviour.
 - 📖 Everyone needs to understand his/her role in leadership.

SUMMARY OF DAY ONE:

Brendon summarised the day's proceedings and closed for the day to reconvene on 24th August at 08h30.

DEVOTIONS:

The meeting reconvened on 24th August:

- i Rev Gaborone led the opening devotions and opened in prayer.
- ii The reading was taken from Luke 10 verse 25-37.
- iii The theme was "**who is your neighbour**" and was based on the parable of the Good Samaritan?
- iv The following points were highlighted:
 - 📖 How do we read the Bible as Presbyterians?
 - 📖 How can we show the world when we can't be one.
 - 📖 Can be friends in church but not out of church.
 - 📖 What do I have to do to make you love me?
 - 📖 We have the task to show the world we are the light of the world.
 - 📖 Can we go and do likewise as in the parable?
 - 📖 We have wonderful preachers but we don't do it.
 - 📖 Need to ask is this what God wants us to do?

SESSION 4: Getting started

- i The Gensec started the session by recapping Day 1.
- ii Jerry handed out notes on his PowerPoint presentation to be included in the tool kit. These covered the main 7 points to be considered. The article is headed "Getting started."
- iii The following questions were clarified:
 - a) The cost of sending someone to Assembly to present a report is to be factored into the committee's budget.
 - b) Section 7 in the file needs to be read by everyone.
 - c) Each committee, except current standing committees, must start a new minute book.
 - d) We need to look at standardising minute books.
- iv Jerry asked for ideas for projects to be included in the CWM submission for funding. He asked for this by the middle of October. Brendon to set up a standardised format and Jerry will send out a note to this effect. Jerry mentioned that one of the key issues should be sustainability.
- v The Clerk then led a session on "**relations with Central Office.**" He covered the following key points:
 - a) It is really about connecting with Central Office and not about us telling you what to do. It is really about building a community. It is about serving you as contained in the Central Office Vision.
 - b) It's about how we can make things easier for you e.g. developing a protocol for closing record books?
 - c) It's about how can we serve you e.g. assisting with transport and venues.
 - d) It's about helping you go forward e.g.
 - ✦ Outlining GA requirements as contained in section 3 of the tool kit.
 - ✦ Looking at due diligence requirements for EXCO next year.
 - ✦ Helping to link with ABC re possible needs.
 - ✦ Assisting other committees e.g. Faith and Order and preparing replacement pages.
- vi It's also about being available if needed for anything e.g. attending committee meetings.
- vii The CFO, Geoff Jooste then led a session on Finance covering the following:

- a) He explained how the new budgeting system would work up to the end of the year then through to July 2013 and thereafter.
- b) He emphasised that the committees were responsible for monitoring their own budgets but he could assist in anyway needed.
- c) He explained the cost centre system being introduced and encouraged different committees to give their inputs on how to improve.
- d) He covered the different policies contained in the tool kit including travel and claims.
- e) He pointed out he was a resource and not a magician.
- f) He emphasised the importance of communicating regularly with the accounts department.
- g) He pointed out that minimal cash would be kept at Central Office.
- h) He pointed out that the cost of cancelling tickets and changing flights would be for the individual.
- i) He stated that all budgets should be prepared well before 2013 as no budget would mean no money for the work of the committee. Budget planning must also be zero based.
- j) Need to understand that a budget is not a pot of money to be spent.
- k) Need to be creative about building CWM monies into budget planning.

SESSION 5: Setting out

- i The following points were raised by way of introduction:
 - a) The best accountability was that set from below and not imposed from above.
 - b) Committees need to determine what they want to achieve.
 - c) Committees need to keep things simple and ask how I can seek help.
 - d) People need the minimum amount of process so have include the LFA method which is in the Tool Kit at section 9.
 - e) The main information is from pages 1-16.
 - f) Brendon explained the main aspects as contained in the article. The meeting then broke into two groups to consider the 4th step re objectives using evangelism as an example. It was explained that all of us need to embrace plurality and simplicity and accept that there will be different answers/models in the church and we won't find one simple definition.
 - g) The following questions were posed for consideration by each group
 - h) The following feedback was given by the groups:

PLENARY SESSION:

Questions:

-  What practical objectives should UPCSA be setting over evangelism?
-  What activities will need to take place at congregational and Presbytery levels?
-  What resources do you need at Congregational and Presbytery levels?

Group 1:

- a) There are three streams of evangelism and all could be found in the same church. These are:
 - ✚ Service evangelism which offers the ministries of the church to all (community).
 - ✚ Missional evangelism; through projects such as soup kitchens, HIV/AIDS and poverty alleviation.
 - ✚ Evangelical evangelism through the sharing of faith in church and privately.
- b) We need to look at what is available in communities to carry this forward.
- c) Need to look at how training resources can be focussed in a particular context so that many can play a role.
- d) Could consider ways to offer ministries of the church to the community such as funerals and weddings.
- e) Need to focus resources on do-able projects.

Group 2:

- a) Objectives of evangelism could include:
 - ✚ To understand better what is meant by the concept.
 - ✚ To understand and outline the different forms of evangelism.
 - ✚ Engender the culture of involving every member of the church in the process of evangelism.
 - ✚ Examine what we are not doing right as a denomination in the process of evangelism.
- b) Activities could include:
 - ✚ Empower people through supplying teaching/reading material as we do outreach e.g. distributing pamphlets.
 - ✚ Improve and align our current programmes used in congregations.
 - ✚ Develop training material on evangelism to equip the members.
 - ✚ Encourage people/members to give testimonies during worship services.
 - ✚ Encourage fellowship that might lead to evangelism.
 - ✚ Caring for the needy and hurting.
- ii The following further points were raised:
 - a) There are different strengths and weaknesses across the denomination.
 - b) Do we focus more on rectifying weaknesses or building on strengths?
 - c) Do you leave those things that are going well and focus your energies elsewhere?
 - d) We need to see congregations as key stakeholders in evangelism.

- e) It is important to define the problem first before we look for a tool to address it e.g. Kairos.
- f) We need to move from thinking to action.
- g) The Gensec's template will be similar to that found in pages 28/29 of the LFA.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS:

- i The Gensec summarised the proceedings as follows:
 - a) We need to set goals that can be monitored and evaluated. The key point being, "What is God asking of us?"
 - b) We need to consider spiritual and practical questions.
 - c) The work must be done on an ongoing basis and we must constantly ask, "What have we achieved? What is stopping us from achieving?"
 - d) We are now becoming outcomes based church. Now a making church i.e. moving from maintenance to mission.
 - e) The UPCSA is relying on Conveners to make things work and we need to build a community together.
 - f) It was suggested that this meeting reconvene sometime next year to discuss, "How far have we gone?"
- ii Jerry concluded by going back over the expectations and it was agreed all but number 3 had been met i.e. To be assisted in identifying suitable candidates for committees. He also re-emphasised the undertaking of Central Office to assist where needed.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS:

The Moderator closed with a reading from Philemon and asked the questions:

- 📖 Are you sharing the faith?
- 📖 Are you refreshing the saints?
- 📖 Are you measuring yourself?