

Mission and Discipleship Committee

Report to the Eleventh General Assembly 2014

The Assembly's Committee on Mission and Discipleship is a vibrant and visionary group of Presbyterians who seek to enthuse the UPCSA to become more missional. The Committee meets twice a year but its influence is felt throughout the year as it's members visit focus Presbyteries, as Grants are made across the UPCSA to purchase land, support ministers and fund new church development. In the past year, the committee met on 19 & 20 November 2013 and on 18 & 19 March 2014. The members of the committee are: The Revs. Theo Groeneveld, Chris Judelsohn, Petson Kabala, Mamalotje Magagane, John McKane, Motorofa Mutonganavu, Khali Nonjojo and Mukondi Ramulondi, Mrs Jackie Barker, Mrs Sheila Hunt (Secretary), Mrs Mmakobo Mosotho and myself.

The five guiding initiatives of the Committee

INSPIRE One of the committee's objectives is to **inspire** the UPCSA for mission, to think in a growth-orientated way, and to offer opportunities for Presbyterians to work with God in the building of God's kingdom. The Committee believes that the Presbyteries of the UPCSA should be planting new congregations but we're also becoming more aware that the shape congregations will take in the future may be totally different to what our experience has been.

Congregations may be less formally structured, less formally led and may take shape around a social need such as healthcare or education. The challenge is whether the Church is equipped to "think outside of the box". What will this Church look like? How do we prepare leaders for this? How should ministers (present and future) be trained so as to minister in these, less formal, settings?

MOBILIZE The **mobilization** of leaders and members of the UPCSA is an important consequence of inspiring the Church. As members are inspired to grow the Church, so the UPCSA needs to provide opportunities for these members to serve. The committee's most far-reaching work is in the establishment of the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries, a structure that we hope will encourage more lay people to participate in the life of the UPCSA. The Committee seeks to establish and maintain support structures for the OSLM.

RESOURCE The committee is constantly seeking **resources** that can be made freely available to ministers and members. To this end, we continue to enlarge our 'library' of electronic bible studies, sermon series etc. available on the

committee's website. In addition, the committee hopes to produce several printed resources free of charge to congregations this year.

INVEST The committee has again this year set a target for the Finance Committee of Assembly – We want the Finance Committee to **invest** more money in the congregations of the UPCSA in the form of Grants. We believe that congregations will be encouraged to pay their assessments if they become aware of an ever increasing percentile of income that is returned to missional congregations. We believe that assessment money can and should be used to grow the Church.

REACH Many Presbyterians believe that missionary endeavour belongs to a bye-gone era. We believe that missionaries are vital to the growth of the Church and **reaching** people with the “breaking in” of God's kingdom. We call the UPCSA to support mission workers at home and abroad. They do frontline work and this year, again, we will draw the attention of the UPCSA to the work of one focus organisation. The committee seeks ways to inspire and equip congregation members for evangelism (spreading the Gospel in their spheres of influence).

What does the committee bring for celebration?

1. **The Committee arranged a fruitful conference in September 2013.**
From 9 to 11 September, the committee held the first “Inspire” Conference at eMseni Conference Centre in Kempton Park. The conference was attended by 124 delegates with the ratio of 6 lay persons to 1 minister! The main speaker, Dr. Marius Nel, from the University of Stellenbosch, was well received and encouraged delegates to think differently about what Church might look like in the future. The committee expresses it's thanks to Dr. Nel not only for his insightful input but also for making himself part of the event. The Committee is also mindful of the fact that a large cash injection from CWM (as part of the MSPF2 programme) made it possible to offer the conference to delegates at R 100 without accommodation and R 400 with accommodation. This funding challenge will have to be addressed in future conferences.

The Committee resolved to hold another conference in 2015. This will be discussed under “discernment”. It will be the first “Inspire” Conference to be digitally recorded and copies of the input sessions and workshops will then be made available to Presbyteries.

2. **The Committee is studying “fresh expressions” of Church.**

The Committee has spent two meetings being exposed to the “fresh expressions” material which has been produced by the Anglican Church in the UK and across the world. The book, “Mission Shaped Church” was distributed to all members and has been the core of our study. In addition, the book “Fresh!” and other media available on the internet have been sourced and studied. Stories emerge, stories of a Church in the future which has changed it’s shape so as to present the Gospel in fresh life-changing ways.

The Committee is also walking alongside the University of Pretoria’s Centre for Contextual Ministry as they seek to offer apprenticeship in “fresh expressions” to the Churches. A primer course began on the weekend of 23 to 25 May 2014 in Johannesburg but further courses will follow. In addition, the Convener has been invited onto the national working group of Fresh Expressions and, in so doing, the committee will be kept up to date with developments in this area.

The Committee is keen to gather local stories about new church development. We would like to share these with the UPCSA. If you know of a story in this regard, please contact the Convener.

3. **Mission Consultations to Thekwini and Limpopo Presbyteries are happening.**
Consultation teams have been set up. Dates have been arranged and in May, two consultation teams will set out for Thekwini and Limpopo respectively. More will be reported in this committee’s Supplementary report. The purpose of a mission consultation is to encourage Presbyteries to identify growth areas within their bounds and then, in partnership with this committee and their local congregations, to plant new congregations. Also, existing congregations are encouraged to think missionally.
4. **The Committee has disbursed more than R 900 000 of Assessment Income in Grants** this year: R 600 000 in grants in aid of Stipend to congregations in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa; R 250 000 to support Church Development Evangelists and around R 50 000 in property grants. It is our privilege to be the channel through which assessment income is returned to congregations of the UPCSA for the building up of the Church.

We are pleased to report that the Finance Committee is presenting a budget to this General Assembly containing an allocation of R 1, 1 million to the work of Mission and Discipleship within the UPCSA. In addition, we celebrate the fact that 100% of this budget allocation will be spent on grants and ministry. The committee celebrates its relationship with the Robert Niven Trust which has granted us enough resource to finance all our administrative and meeting and travel costs.

5. **New Resources are available on the website**

The committee's website is receiving an ever increasing number of "hits". More and more Presbyterians are consulting it. We celebrate the increasing number of ministers who are 'donating' resources such as bible studies and sermon series to be posted on the site. Thank you! We encourage Presbyterians to make use of these free to print resources.

www.upcsa-mad.org.za

6. **The OSLM is coming to Assembly 2014.**

The Committee is pleased to announce the launch of the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries (OSLM). Previous Assemblies and Executive Commissions have established the Order, resolved that it should be opened in 2014, established how an OSLM appointment should be made and approved a job specification for its Co-ordinator. The committee celebrates this. In addition, the committee celebrates the fact that an amount of R400 000 has been set aside from the CWM MSPF2 programme funding for the salary of the OSLM Co-ordinator. Thus the appointment will cost the UPCSA nothing!

Look out for the 'launch' of the OSLM at this General Assembly.

7. **A way to measure the quality of congregational life.**

At its recent meeting in March, the committee received a presentation from one of our retired ministers, the Rev. Dr. Roger Tucker, on a tool available for use in congregations, called the National Congregational Life Survey. This instrument, which has been used in the USA and Australia, has now been used in congregations in our ecumenical family. The product, sponsored by the University of the Free State, is being investigated for use in the UPCSA.

On 9 May, ministers in Tshwane, Highveld, Lekoa and eGoli Presbyteries are due to attend a presentation by Dr. Ruth Powell, from Australia, about the use of this product. We hope to present further information in our Supplementary report.

8. **How effective was our support of the International Sailors Society?**

The committee began to focus the attention of the UPCSA on a focus missionary organisation last year. We highlighted the work of the International Sailors Society in 2013/14. A presentation was made to the Executive Commission last July, pamphlets were handed out, and this Convener appealed to the UPCSA in a circular letter to support the work of the ISS.

The Rev. Boet van Schalkwyk, the ISS Executive Director, has expressed the thanks of the ISS to the Committee and we are passing this on to the UPCSA. Boet is doing presentations in two churches every month all around the UPCSA and the response has been fantastic. At the recommendation of the committee, the ISS adapted their promotional DVD and it has worked very well. They have reworked their pamphlets

to include a list of ways that people can respond. This has improved things greatly and donations have been received, and people have caught the vision etc.

After last Executive Commission, the committee sent a survey in print and online to all congregations of the UPCSA. The Committee received a low response – about 25% of congregations responded and of the response, only 30% supported any missionary organisation either financially, in prayer or with service.

What is the Committee bringing for discernment?

1. **Dismantling the “box” of the way we do Church.**

The problem with the future is that we haven't been there yet! We are seeing signs of it breaking in. Interesting research is being done into the ways the different generations (Baby boomers, Generation X and Y and the Millennial generation) see and interact with the world around them. Demographic studies are showing how our churches are changing. The relationship between migrant workers (yes, that is a term that is being used to describe members of rural congregations who live in cities for work but return to their 'home churches' for holidays and long weekends) and their city congregation vs their rural congregation. Where do they tithe? Where do they 'participate'?

Young people, growing up in South Africa today, are looking for different things than their parents and grandparents did. How will the Church change? How will we be reshaped for a new generation?

The Mission and Discipleship committee is trying grasp the changes and to discern how the UPCSA can reach out to the de-churched, the un-churched and to the atheistic in our communities. As the middle class grows and as people experience affluence, they seem to be lured away from attending worship.

How will we respond? How can we meet people with the saving gospel of Christ? The fresh expressions movement may teach us something about how we can respond.

2. **What Church Growth project shall we support?**

The committee wishes to propose to the Assembly that a major part of the Committee's work for 2014/2015 should be to select a Church planting project, to nurture and resource this project and, ultimately, to display this project to the 2015 Executive Commission.

The committee is exploring ideas within the Presbyteries of Limpopo and Thekwini as well as a proposal from St John's, Middleburg. This project would be our focus for the year from Assembly to Executive Commission. We would put resource toward it as well as offering as much expertise and advice as we are able.

The committee considers this a pilot for future projects.

3. **Models of Ministry.**

Sadly there has not been adequate progress on the exploration of different forms of ministry. This committee, together with Assembly's Ministry Committee, was given the task of exploring these issues by the last General Assembly. Some research has been done in exploring how other ecumenical partners have handled this subject but a consultation on the subject between the committees is yet to be held. We hope that the supplementary report will show progress as well as a proposal in this area.

4. **A Co-ordinator for OSLM.**

In late 2013, the Convener was approached by the General Secretary about the position of part-time OSLM Convener. The General Secretary reported that he had presented a proposal for the restructuring of Central Office staff to the Church Office Committee. In this plan, the position of "Mission Enabler" was envisaged and the General Secretary felt that the part-time OSLM position could be incorporated into this role. This Convener felt positively disposed toward the proposal but when it was presented to the Committee, the committee expressed serious reservations about the request. Two reasons were cited: First, the General Secretary had subsequently given notice that he would resign later this year and the committee had no assurance that the integrity of the OSLM would be maintained. Second, the committee felt that the person it sought to administer the OSLM was a part-time administrative person, a layperson, and the person that the Church Office committee may seek would be a minister or an executive type employee. Therefore, the committee is proposing that the Church Office Committee simply carry out the 2013 Executive Commission's instruction to appoint an OSLM Co-ordinator.

The supplementary report will contain an appendix which seeks to consolidate the Manual's legislation on the Order of Lay Preachers and Church Development Evangelists into a new section on the Order of Supportive Lay Ministry.

5. **The primer course OSLM.**

The committee is putting the finishing touches to the "primer course" which will be a basic introduction to the Gospel and the UPCSA which will be used for new applicants to the OSLM. In our supplementary report, the outline of the course will be presented for the Assembly's consideration.

6. **Resources, Resources, Resources**

Two members of the committee recently completed an investigation into the UPCSA Central Office's resource centre. There was a mixed finding. First, the part of the resource centre which sells hymn books, certificates and manuals is being well run and functioning properly. Second, the section that used to contain Christian

Education, Stewardship and Evangelism resources is now dated and unusable. There are film reels and Video cassettes as well as audio tapes aplenty and countless piles of out-of-date printed matter. We respectfully suggest that the resources be destroyed. It is with delight that we learn that some resources have been placed in a library in the Sedibeng house for the use of our students for the ministry. The Internet seems to be where people go when they need 'free-to-print' resources. We suggest that a terminal and printer be made available at Central Office for ministers and elders to search for resources.

The committee is in the process of developing or sourcing a resource on evangelism for use in UPCSAs congregations. We believe that this is a much neglected area of congregational ministry and hope to assist in resourcing it. Two commercially available resources are Willow Creek's **Walk across the room**[™] and *Share Jesus without fear*[™] (www.sharejesuswithoutfear.com). See the attachments on these.

7. **Minimum Stipends, Transport Allowances – Regulating Emoluments**

The committee is responsible for forecasting minimum Stipends and other allowances for ministers working in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa for the calendar year 2015. Our Supplementary report will contain a comprehensive list of proposals on this.

8. **New mission agency.**

Consistent with the committee's objective of introducing the work of a missionary organisation to the congregations of the UPCSAs every year, the committee is calling on the Assembly to focus on African Enterprise for the year 2014/2015. We are pleased to note that the Moderator is using the book, *The Church Jesus prayed for*, by AE founder, Michael Cassidy, for the theme of this Assembly. AE is a Southern African missionary organisation and well known to many Presbyterians. We commend their ministry to the Assembly and to congregations of the UPCSAs. We will be handing out brochures in this regard at Assembly 2014.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the services of Mrs. Sheila Hunt (for the last 10 years) as secretary to the committee (and its predecessors) and liaison with the UPCSAs congregations. In the Central Office, we thank Ms Bester Mahlangu who makes all payments upon instruction from the committee. These ladies serve us well. In addition, we acknowledge the Presbytery M&D Conveners/liaison persons who represent their Presbyteries and make our work easier. We thank the Robert Niven Trust for its annual donation to Mission and Discipleship within the UPCSAs. We consider it a privilege to serve the Church.

GW Marchinkowski
CONVENER

Proposals:

1. The Assembly receives the report.
2. The Assembly
 - (a) celebrates the fruitful “Inspire” Conference held from 9 to 11 September 2013;
 - (b) expresses its appreciation to Dr. Marius Nel who spoke at the conference; and
 - (c) instructs the M&D Committee to plan a second “Inspire” Conference in 2015.
3. The Assembly
 - (a) celebrates the fact that the M&D Committee is studying the “Fresh Expressions” initiative of the Church of England (UK) and becoming involved in its ecumenical structures;
 - (b) instructs the committee to investigate the Mission Shaped Ministry apprenticeship offered by the Universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria for use in the UPCSA and report to the Executive Commission in 2015;
 - (c) encourages the committee to present new models of how “congregations” might be shaped in the future to the Executive Commission in 2015.
4. The Assembly
 - (a) celebrates the fact that R 900 000 of the UPCSA’s assessment income is returned to congregations in grants;
 - (b) encourages the committee to continue to explore ways of how assessment income can be used to grow the UPCSA.
5. The Assembly thanks those who have donated resources to the M&D Committee for use in the Church and encourages its ministers and members to use the website.
6. The Assembly
 - (a) celebrates the launch of the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries;
 - (b) calls on all lay members of the UPCSA involved in supportive ministries to join the OSLM by applying to their Sessions; and
 - (c) encourages all Sessions to seek out lay persons who may benefit from inclusion in the OSLM and to assist them to join.
7. The Assembly, noting that the decision of its Executive Commission (Decision 10 of M&D Report) has not been carried out, instructs the Church Office Committee to proceed to the appointment of a part-time Co-ordinator for the OSLM without any further delay;
8. The Assembly instructs the Church Office Committee to clear out unusable resources in the resource centre and to provide a computer terminal and printer for use of ministers and members of the OSLM who need to find resources on the internet.
9. The Assembly
 - (a) celebrates the positive response of congregations to the committee’s focus on the International Sailors Society;
 - (b) notes the generally low level of engagement of congregations with missionary organisations; and
 - (c) commends the work of African Enterprise to congregations and members of the UPCSA encouraging them to support this organisation with prayer, service and financial support.