

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

Newsletter: April 2013

The New Plan

“Back in Natal the year 1913 saw the drafting of suggestions for re-organising the work. A commission was appointed to consult the churches over every aspect, which had to be ratified by each church and agreed to by the ministers. So it was not until January 1919 that the Isu Elisha (“new plan”) came into effect, and then only for a trial period of five years.

As one historian explains “pure” Congregationalism had its drawbacks as far as the Zulu churches were concerned: where only the local church was involved in the call and support of a minister, stipends were allowed to sadly get in areas; nor was there any machinery for transferring men whose usefulness had finished in posts they occupied and “a certain slackness” was found in many places.

These were the defects the Isu Elisha proposed to remedy through a central fund to disburse stipends and through an Executive Committee (called Umlomo, “the mouth”) with authority to regulate the settlement of ministers.

“The Harvest and the Hope” (1971) at p. 135,136 Rev Joe Wing and D. Roy Briggs.

The UCCSA Ministry and Mission Fund

---the plan to generate mission resources

Why a Ministry and Mission Fund?

The UCCSA has a glorious 214 year history of community service, activism and proclamation of the gospel. But today the Church is experiencing a grave financial strain. The financial reserves of the Church are almost depleted due to the current economic financial meltdown. The financial resources available are inadequate to meet the mission needs and work of the local churches and its people. Synods, Regions and Local Churches are also struggling with financial issues and unable to meet their obligations to the denomination.

Take a moment to pause and reflect on the situation we have just described. Even more, take a moment to reflect on the situation in your Local Church, your Synod and Region. What do you see?

As a member of the UCCSA family it is time for us to act according to our hope. We do have the courage and commitment it takes to change the financial situation of our church. We must create opportunities to fully utilize the resources and assets of the Church, which includes mining prospects, agricultural land and historical places, some of which have remained unused for years. These assets will generate income and provide resources for God's mission. You can be a part of the new vision and plan for your Church and its renewed commitment to God's Mission.

What is the Story of the Ministry and Mission Fund?

To understand the idea of the Ministry and Mission Fund there are some key dates and events you should know. These include: **the UCCSA Assembly 1971; the Outeniqua Assembly 2007; the Molepolole Assembly 2009; the Maputo Assembly 2011**. Each of these Assemblies was an important marker in furthering the decision to address the issue of a central fund to give adequate pay to Ministers and develop proposals for the financial sustainability of the Church.

But did you know that the idea of a Central Fund predates the creation of the UCCSA in 1967? In fact the idea of a central fund has been around since 1913!

See the quote in the sidebar from *“The Harvest and the Hope”* (1971) at p. 135 written by UCCSA stalwarts Rev Joe Wing and D. Roy Briggs under the aptly titled heading “The New Plan”.



Almost 100 years later since the *Isu Elisaha* (the “New Plan”), the UCCSA Central Office facilitated a similar discussion at the **Church Indaba in Feb 2012**. The Indaba was held under the theme “Restructuring and Resourcing the Mission of God” and considered the ideas generated at the Maputo Assembly in 2011. The Indaba generated several agreements including the implementation and operation of a Central Fund.

Times have certainly changed since 1913 but the issue of financial sustainability and payment of a just and consistent wages and stipends still remains an outstanding issue. **The Ministers Salary and Stipend Survey** conducted in 2010 showed the unjust and unequal way in which many UCCSA Ministers continue to be paid. In one instance a serving local Minister of the UCCSA receives less than R1000 (just over USD100) per month; and the average salary of a UCCSA Minister with a family is R5000 (just over 600 USD). This has resulted in a poor quality of ministry and pastoral care especially to congregations in rural areas. UCCSA takes its identity as a Justice Church seriously and it is urgent and just that we pay Ministers and our church workers a just living wage. It is for this reason that the Church has been taking steps towards the full implementation and operation of the Ministry and Mission Fund to

So HOW WILL IT WORK?

The proposals from the Church Indaba in February 2012 suggested five key strategies:

1. Conduct **Education Campaigns** to raise awareness about the Ministry and Mission Fund.
2. Approve a **Policy Framework** for the governance and administration of the Ministry and Mission Fund.
3. Conduct a Fundraising campaign- “**Covenant for Change**” – contribution of members of R100.00 per month for the next 2 years.
4. Establish the **Ministry & Mission Fund** with Ten Million Rand as the base (stabilization fund) for a central fund.
5. Establish **Task Teams** of people who will work towards implementing and monitoring ideas for establishment of the Ministry and Mission Fund.

These have each begun in earnest and are work in progress. The Officers and Executive Members have conducted Roadshows as part of the Education Campaigns in February and March which have been featured in this Newsletter. And many of you have already made contributions to the *Covenant for Change* Campaign. Your participation and support for these activities is invaluable.

So we encourage you to **GET INVOLVED!**

YOU can help to make the Ministry and Mission Fund a reality by taking three simple steps:

- **Give** R100 a month for the creation of the Ministry and Mission Fund.
- **Share** this information.
- **Pray** for the Ministry & Mission Fund.

In the next issue of the UCCSA Newsletter we will share with you the principles that will guide the operation of the Ministry and Mission Fund. You can support by the **Covenant for Change** Campaign by debit orders to Standard Bank. See the bank details below or contact the Central Office on 011 837 9997 for more information. And do feel free to send us your questions or feedback regarding the Ministry and Mission Fund at tellus.uccsa@gmail.com.

Standard Bank
Melville Branch: 006105
Name of Account: UCCSA Convocation
Account number: 207938652



Serving Soweto: Telling the Story of Bridgman Centre

by Rev D Nxumalo and Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda

The UCCSA has a proud heritage of social concern, of caring for the whole person; and story of Bridgman is a shining example of this. The Bridgman Centre is located in Zola Soweto. The Bridgman Centre has over the years been a site of struggle against apartheid; poverty; HIV and AIDS; neglect of children and the elderly; and poor education systems. The plans for the establishment of the Centre begun in 1967 with monies that were received after the expropriation of the Bridgman Clinic by the then apartheid government.

Who was Bridgman?

The Centre is named after a former American Missionary, the Rev JF Bridgman, who had been sent by the United Christian Board for World Mission (UCBWM). Dr Bridgman was instrumental in establishing the Helping Hand Club in Jeppestown that catered for young women coming usually from rural areas to work in the city. He also helped to create the Bantu Men's Social Centre on Eloff Street extension and worked closely with Dr Ray Phillips in setting up the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Studies which turned out the first black social workers in the country, many of whom became famous leaders in our society.

Dr Bridgman also began a clinic to give medical care to migrant mine workers and others in need. His dream was to build a hospital but he died at an early age in 1925 during a visit to the USA. His widow worked hard to raise the finances that led to the opening in 1928 of the Bridgman Memorial Hospital in Mayfair close to the current UCCSA Brixton Offices which is now called Garden City Clinic, one of the best Clinics in Johannesburg. By the time UCCSA was born in 1967 the apartheid government closed the hospital for being a "black spot in white areas".

When it came time to give a name to the Community Centre built in Zola, the Central Region of the UCCSA South Africa Synod chose to honour this early pioneer of social activity, in naming the Centre after the activist and missionary-Dr F Bridgman.

Establishing the Bridgman Development Centre

The site was leased in 1967 only a matter of days after the formation of the UCCSA in October of that year. It was one of the number of sites leased during the late sixties and early seventies. Its position and size was ideal for a community centre as well as church. The Rev Percy Webber of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) drew up the plans, just as he had for so many of our churches. Obtaining funding was hard as the Emergency Building Fund of the UCCSA set up to help in rebuilding much needed Churches after the removal of communities under the Group Areas Act had demands upon it countrywide that were great in number. Credit is due to Rev Joseph Wing, the General Secretary of the UCCSA, for his help in supporting the building of the Centre.

However, getting approval of the government authorities was another problem. Churches were easily approved but a Social Centre that could provide a home for community activities that were not government prescribed was more difficult.



Current Director of Bridgman
Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda at work



Children of Bridgman 2013



Bridgman Centre 2013



Homework at Bridgman 2013



The original plan, for instance, included a place for a number of visitors and delegates to conferences to sleep over. This part had to be removed before approval was given for what was then known as the “Zola Centre” on February 13th 1973. The steel structure was started before the end of that month and the building completed during 1974 for grand official opening of the now “Bridgman Memorial Church Centre” in 1975 by the then Chairman of the UCCSA, the Rev Basil Brown. The first Minister/Director to run the Centre was then Acting Minister of the South Johannesburg Circuit, Rev Dan Langa. The Rev BNB Ngidi followed him in 1979.

Bridgman Centre Today

There are numerous people who built and led Bridgman Development Centre to what it is today. Rev Bernard Spong's name is synonymous to Bridgman Development Centre as one of its early pioneers. It is important that we give credit also to the work done by Mrs Edith Dikeledi Nkwanyana who spearheaded the Pre-school programme at the Centre. The Centre continued to grow and received fresh impetus with the arrival of Mrs Veronica Kyle in January 2003; along with Rev Dumisani Nxumalo, who is the immediate past Director and Malusi Makalima who was his predecessor.

At the moment the Centre provides several programmes which include: an aftercare programme for primary school children; a toddlers care programme (crèche); an exercise and activity programme for grannies (elderly women); Girls against the Spread of Aids (GASA); and Boys against the spread of Aids (BASA) and Karate Classes. The Centre is owned and supported by the UCCSA, Central Region, and its ecumenical partners; including the special partnership of the UCCSA with Global Ministries. The Centre is in an impoverished area of Soweto and has survived over the years through the generous giving of friends and churches, and more importantly by the grace of God. With the global economic meltdown inner-city communities such as Soweto have been severely affected. Still we pledge to continue share the news of the Centre, and to enable our churches and partners to participate, even if at a distance, in the life of this community.

Pray with us that God will use us together to continue this work that was begun with such passion for our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you would like to volunteer at Bridgman or make a contribution towards the work of the Bridgman Development Centre do contact the Director at P.O Box 133 Kwa Xuma 1868, South Africa or telephone +27 11 930 2675 or e-mail at wellosacha@gmail.com

The Commitment to COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, JUSTICE & PEACE

In 2007 UCCSA gave even more root to its commitments to community empowerment, justice and peace with the establishment of two awards: The UCCSA **Congregational Justice & Peace Award** and the **Community Empowerment Award**. The UCCSA General Secretary, Rev Dr. Moiserale Dibeela proposed the establishment of the awards at the UCCSA Executive Committee Meeting in Hanover Park, Capetown in March 2007. In putting forward the recommendation for the creation of the Congregational Justice & Peace Award Rev Dibeela said:

“In order for us to be able to live and promote justice we need to acknowledge those people in our countries and communities who work for these virtues. There are many of our members and others who are not necessarily related to us as a Church who are tirelessly working for peace and justice in their countries and throughout Southern Africa. I think we need to create an award that will recognize such people. Such an award will encourage and promote this kind of work in our region. We would have to develop guidelines for assisting us in accepting people for this award. It would have to be people whose work leads to the promotion of peace and justice, and would have to be work that is of a national character. Through this award the UCCSA would place herself at the cutting-edge of transforming societies, and would become a major player in seeking justice. It would also encourage justice activists to clearly recognize the link between their work and Christian faith. Like Chief Albert Luthuli said many years ago, ‘I am a politician because I am Christian.’”

Rev Dibeela further added that the Community Empowerment Award “would be for people who are involved in local community development projects...I believe that through these awards the UCCSA would locate herself at the center of what is happening with regard to the struggle for peace and justice, and community empowerment initiatives.”



The **Congregational Justice and Peace Award** can be given to:

- A group, institution individual or more than one individual who are deemed to have distinguished themselves as envoys of justice and peace in their societies.
- Such people may be nominated to the adjudicating panel by others who see these virtues in them.
- The contribution of the awardees should be such that it extends beyond their local communities and has a national character.
- The recipient(s) of the award should have a visible, traceable and transformative impact in Society.
- The recipient(s) shall have to demonstrate personal and corporate integrity and ethical disposition.
- Any person(s) or institution regardless of their belief, creed or denomination.

The Award is presented once every two years during September and usually at an Assembly. Since the establishment of the Congregational Justice & Peace Award its first awardee has been Rev Sandra Gourdet for her tireless work in supporting the churches and people of Southern Africa in the areas of HIV and AIDS, hunger, landlessness and marginalization.

The **Community Empowerment Award** is inspired by the prophetic call recorded in Isaiah 58:6-7 to *“Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear...”* (Good News). The Award seeks to recognise and honour members of the UCCSA who are involved in the development, empowerment and improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of their communities. The objectives of the Award are to:

- Promote a justice culture within the life of the UCCSA and to recognise and honour activist and practitioners in community empowerment.
- Recognise church projects and church related institutions for the work they do in addressing poverty and socio-economic injustices.
- Draw the attention of the church and the world to the work of those who are involved in the struggle against poverty.

The criteria for honouring an individual or institution with the award are:

- The recipient(s) should be a member in good standing of the UCCSA.
- If it is an institution it should either be fully or partially owned by a UCCSA church, region, synod or denomination.
- It should be people who are involved in any work that leads to the betterment of their communities.
- It should be people whose work does not lead to their own enrichment or is not profit making for themselves.
- It should be people who have the support of their church and community.

In 2011 Lephoi Centre for visually impaired children in Francistown, Botswana was the recipient of the Community Empowerment Award. ” The Centre is fully owned and run by the UCCSA and has been in operation since 1986. The Lephoi Centre is currently home to about 55 young people who are either blind or partially sighted and over the years has provided housing and support to more than 1000 children with disability.

Please forward nominations for the Community Empowerment Award and the Congregational Justice & Peace Award to the office of the UCCSA General Secretary by **31st May, 2013**. Nominations should be accompanied by a brief motivation of the reasons for nominating the individual or institution. Awards will be presented at the 37th UCCSA Assembly in September, 2013.



KLIPTOWN EBENEZER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OUTREACH *by Rev Elliot Z. Jingqi*

The Kiptown Ebenezer Congregational Church has a rich history and was established about 1913. The church was one of the churches in the in the old Transvaal under the banner of the Congregational Union of South Africa. One of its early leaders is Rev Charles Phillips. In 1989 a new Church building was dedicated and the membership of the Church to date stands at about 319 members.

The Kiptown Ebenezer Congregational Church having been led by the Holy Spirit has deemed it necessary to reach out to those who are less fortunate. Many of the members of the Church are unemployed or receive a Government grant. The community around the Church also suffers the same fate. As part of our Outreach Programme the Church has adopted the Kliprivier Church which is part of the SOWESTRA cluster of Churches. There are seventeen families at Kliprivier who are in dire need of anything that can be provided ranging from food, clothes, spiritual support, etc. We envisage to visit Kliprivier once every month.

As a Church we want to reclaim our being a Church and do what Jesus Christ has done, to feed the hungry and to clothe those who are naked.

Rev Elliot Z. Jingqi has been serving the Kiptown Ebenezer Congregational Church since his call to the church in 2012. He is an ordained Minister of the UCCSA. He is married and serves the church with his wife Nokuzola Cynthia Jingqi and their two children Sesethu (20years) and Ntsika (15 years).



Minister Rev Jingqi & wife (Cynthia Jingqi), with Sister Sheryl and Brother David Howard.



Kiptown Congregational Church building



Children of Kiptown Sunday School



Tribute to Honourable Kebuseditswe Esther Molete



Mrs. Esther Molete was a Mayor of the Joe Morolong Municipality in South Africa and a UCCSA Executive Committee Member. Regretfully she died on Wednesday April 17th, 2013. Below is an abridged tribute by the Rev Dr Prince Dibeela, General Secretary of the UCCSA in her honour.

It is unbelievable that Hon Mayor Kebuseditswe Esther Molete is no more with us. We were with her recently in Serowe, Botswana in March (2013) where, together with many of us, she attended the Executive Committee of the UCCSA. Now we are here paying our last respects to her. How life is so short, fragile and can be so cruel especially to the kindest among us.

Hon. Esther Molete was a kind and generous person. She was always seeking to do something for the Church and community. She had a passion in assisting our students for the ministry, our retired ministers and always wanted to know how she could support the programmes of the Church. She was proud of her Church and played a pivotal role in the life and witness of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. She served as a member of the Board of Directors at the Moffat Mission, she was Chairperson of the Fundraising Committee of the Mission and she was also a Member of the Executive Committee of the UCCSA.

Hon Esther Molete took seriously her job. There are many people who are given roles and responsibilities to serve their communities but they often end up serving their own interests. We have many incomplete projects because our leaders are busy attending conferences, workshops, board meetings symposiums and so on. They move from one meeting to another but hardly make time to connect and serve the people who have put them in those positions. Hon. Molete was not one of these people. Many of you will testify to the fact that last year when there were strikes and children could not go to school Hon Molete was one of the few leaders who engaged, listened to the cries of the people in order to seek solutions to their problems.

We pray that Hon Esther Molete will rest in peace. I call upon her church and her friends to care for her children and her mother so that they do not live destitute lives. Long live the spirit of Esther Molete long live!

IN HER WORDS

“I think we should re-discover the revolutionary prowess of the Bible through a re-reading process where the focus is not on demons falling in obedience to us but on the total liberation of people from all forms of oppression. Christian faith should not be used as a “drug” for the ills of society but it should be a thunderbolt and a roaring lion that sends tremors to oppressors”

***Address by Hon Esther Molete to Leadership Academy
Preacher’s Course Graduates in 2012***



Outside The Temple by Rev Prince Dibeela*

Read Acts 3:1-10

This Bible study seeks to serve as an invitation for us to reflect on justice and economy, especially in the light of the ever increasing impoverishment of communities. The story in our text takes place around the temple. During the first century the temple played an important role in the Judaic socio-economic fabric. The temple was not just a space for worship; it was also a place of networking, socializing, theological debates and even making business deals. Here the scribes, teachers of the law, politicians and economists came to participate in worship as well as shape the political economy of the time. The Temple in Jerusalem was therefore a symbol, in a sense, political heart of the country. To begin with it was an enormous piece of real estate which was one of the architectural spectacles of the time. It represented the religious stature of Judaism, the political history of Israel and its economic hopes. It was a space that could accommodate large numbers of pilgrims, merchants, tourists and curious travellers. It represented a system of the powerful, the movers and shakers and the flamboyant economists of the time. It was a space for activities akin to today's boardroom dealings, stock market exchanges, theological dialogue and political affectations. It clearly was a system that excluded the poor and powerless citizens of the Empire.

The unwanted man at the 'Temple'

In the text though we encounter someone whose life and existence was 'outside' temple. He is a person with a disability and that defined him in a particular way in the religious and political economy of the time. He is among many who were excluded from the mainstream economy of the time.

Question:

- i) ***What might have been the reasons for the exclusion of the man (beggar) in the story?***
- ii) ***What are the other categories of people who may have been excluded like him?***

When South Africa won the bid to host the World Cup there was a lot of excitement and hope that this would boost the economy and all will benefit. The impression was created that all South Africans will gain from the economic windfall that will follow this event. However, more and more people were disillusioned by the unfulfilled promises of this event. One of them is Phumi.

PHUMI'S STORY

Phumi works as an informal trader, selling cooked food for labourers working for a Construction Company building one of the stadiums for the world cup. She and a group of seven other women have been working at the soccer city stadium since 2006. They describe themselves as having been part of the building of the stadium. They say 'we built the stadium.' However, they have been chased out by different authorities at least 8 times over a period of four years. They have resisted the attempts to get rid of them by coming back or shifting locations. FIFA established a cafeteria and encouraged the workers to buy from it instead of buying from the women. However, the workers preferred to buy from the women because they could buy on credit and pay at the end of the month. The men also complained that the food from the cafeteria was not healthy as they had problems with their tummies. The Construction blamed this on the food from the women, but Phumi had this to say about that;

"They use processed foods and buy in bulk in order to refrigerate the food. We don't have the money to buy a lot at a time; we use fresh food that we buy each day."

Although the municipality, the FIFA and the construction company wanted the women out, they remained outside the soccer city stadium. Through the help of ESSET (Ecumenical Services for Socio-Economic Transformation) and the churches they were temporarily allowed to stay. They continued to resist the efforts to remove them and Phumi and her co-traders vowed to continue to fight for their livelihood and that of their families.



Question:

- i) **Are there any similarities between the man in the text (the beggar) and Phumi?**
- ii) **Can you think of other similar stories/experiences of exclusion in your community?**
- iii) **Why did this man choose to beg at the entrance of the temple and not at some other place?**

The many people who came to the temple most likely gave the man who was begging at the gate of Beautiful some money. However, it is also most likely that they never bothered to stop to talk with him, ask him how he was and simply share their humanity with him. He was virtually invisible to them. Perhaps the fact that the writer does not know his name and simply refers to him as 'a beggar' is illustrative of his unimportance. Verse 6 indicates that Peter and John did not have money. However, they did something for this man that is very different from what all others had done for him. Instead of giving him spare change they gave him back a life that he never had. They enabled him to **walk, to become strong, to jump, to enter the temple, and to praise God**. Now he who has been an outsider has been capacitated to enter and participate in the political economy of the temple.

Peter and John play an important role of 'agency' in this system of exclusion. They disturb the order of things by helping this man to dig deep inside him and find God's energy that is latent in all of us. It is important that this political agency is done in the context of prayer (see verse 1). There should not be a disconnect between our worship and acts of mercy, political activism and campaign for justice.

Question:

- i) **What can the church do in the struggle for justice and the inclusion of the powerless?**
- ii) **How can our worship be a place/time of awakening our quest for God's justice in the economy and human relationships?**

Conclusion:

As we wind up this study we suggest that you spend sometime of meditation by yourself. Think about the many people who are made vulnerable by big business, human traffickers and the complicity of the church in the midst of economic injustice. Like Peter and John we may not have the money or the power to effect massive and dramatic change that will leave visible impact. But we too have something we can do to contribute to the furtherance of God's justice in the world. Use this time to commit yourself to an action you can do which will help others to walk, to feel strong, to jump, and to feel their humanity restored and validated. Such action may include a commitment to embrace justice in the way we live our lives as Church.

Prayer:

God who became a peasant and walked the streets with the poor in search of justice

We come before you

God who in your rage turned the tables of the systems of Empire

We bow before you

God who sits outside our synagogues, temples and churches

We yearn to know you

Creator and Sustainer of the universe, we honour and praise you

May there be justice for all

May the empires of this world bow before you

May all who sit 'outside' enter our homes and churches

May there be amazement as all share in the joy of a new world

Where there is inclusion of all in God's economy

Amen.

*This Bible Study was originally prepared for the **Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation (ESSET)** in 2010. ESSET is a South African ecumenical Section 21 company that is committed to mobilizing the church to be involved in issues of economic justice: <http://www.esset.org.za>



NEWS BRIEFS



Rev Prince Dibeela and Rev Thulani Ndlazi share the Eucharist.

The Central Office and South Africa Synod celebrates monthly communion. Staff of the UCCSA Central Office and South Africa Synod Office both located in Johannesburg have restarted monthly communion and worship services to strengthen the covenant and fellowship between the two offices. Communion services have been held on February 26 at the UCCSA Central Office in Brixton Johannesburg and on April 3 at the South Africa Synod Office at Westgate, Johannesburg. The recent communion service was held on April 25, 2013 at the Central Office.

UCCSA facilitates annual 2013 Interns' Conference. The first of the two Interns' workshops for 2013 was held during April 9-12. at the Koinonia Catholic Centre in Bruma, Johannesburg South Africa. The workshop gathers theological studies graduates who would have been approved for Internship by the UCCSA. The conference workshop provide the Assembly Training for Ministry Committee (ATMC) with the opportunity to assess interns' progress through interviews, build team spirit and unity among ministerial interns; and facilitate ministerial formation. The conference also provides information on various subject areas that are identified as relevant. This year Interns' participated in workshops including: Congregational History and Mission Engagement; Mission in Context; the Challenge of Racism and Sexism and Discrimination.

Rev Bernard Spong completes 50 years of Ministry in the UCCSA. On the 14th April, 2013 a service of commemoration will be held in honour of Rev Bernard Spong at AJ Wookey Memorial Church in Vryburg. Rev Spong completed 50 years of ministry to the UCCSA since his arrival in South Africa as a London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary in 1963. He was also hosted by the Kuruman Moffat Mission who shared in the celebration of his work and contribution to the UCCSA. Commenting on the weekend celebrations Rev Spong said: "The weekend was superb. It was an affirming time as well as celebratory and I once again experienced that sense of being "at home" with my fellow UCCSA members."

UCCSA celebrates Zimbabwe Day and South Africa Day. UCCSA marked Zimbabwe Day April 18, and honoured with the people of Zimbabwe 33 years since its independence. The story goes that the first official words uttered in Zimbabwe, following the raising of the new nation's flag, were, "Ladies and gentlemen, Bob Marley and The Wailers." In April 1980 Bob Marley and the Wailers performed at Zimbabwe's official Independence Ceremony at the invitation of the country's newly elected president Robert Mugabe. There are many reflections of all that's wrong with Zimbabwe but marking the day meant that even if for a moment the UCCSA members and friends were invited to celebrate the resilience of the people of Zimbabwe and to remind them that we pray for them and send them our love.

UCCSA celebrates April 27 as South Africa Day to celebrate with all South Africans the day known as **Freedom Day**. Freedom Day is a South African public holiday. It celebrates freedom and commemorates the first post-apartheid elections held on that day in 1994. They were the first national elections in South Africa in which the franchise did not depend upon race.

Namibia Day marking the regaining of independence in Namibia was celebrated on March 21.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF GENERAL SECRETARY FOR THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Search Committee is hereby inviting nominations for the position of General Secretary for the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

Background

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa was established on 3rd October 1967. It was a union of three former congregational denominations, the Bantu Congregational Church, the London Missionary Society and the Congregational Union of South Africa. In 1972 it united with Disciples of Christ. Although the UCCSA is only 46 years old it traces its beginnings to the arrival of the London Missionary Society in 1799. It has among its predecessors great names such as John Philip, Johannes van der Kemp, John Dube, Albert Luthuli, Saul Damon, Joshua Danisa and Marope Modukanele.

The UCCSA is a trans-national church spanning five countries, namely; Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The UCCSA Central Office is located at 150 Caroline Street, Brixton, 2019. However, it, and the General Secretary, has a close relationship with the Synod offices in Helderkruijn, Roodepoort, Gaborone, Bulawayo, Maputo and Windhoek.

UCCSA Missional Priorities

The UCCSA believes that mission begins with God and that we are partners with God in mission. It believes that mission is a task of the whole church and not just of interested individuals and that to share in God's Mission, every church is both a receiver of help and a giver of its talents. The current Missional priorities of the denomination are:

- Enabling Local Churches to be more faithful in their participation in the Mission of God*
- Increasing Commitment to solidarity, prophetic witness and the quest for justice*
- Training, development, conscientization of the Church for God's Mission*
- Deepening life-affirming relationships including those related to race, ethnicity, gender, age and physical ability, identity and accountability to God, to each other, to different courts of the Church.*

Job Description

Job Title: General Secretary

Responsible to: The Officers and the Executive

The General Secretary is responsible for the general oversight of the Church. He/She has the responsibility to guide the missional direction of the Church. This shall include:

- Providing operational leadership to the staff in the Central Office as well as the UCCSA Secretariat.*



- *Engaging synods and regions in order to achieve the stated missional priorities of the Church, its Mission and Vision Plan an unequivocal commitment to developing a 'Justice Church'.*
- *Raise the profile of the Church by participating, representing the UCCSA and providing leadership in the ecumenical movement, as an African Church on the continent and beyond.*
- *Ensuring that the programmes of the UCCSA affect communities directly and contribute towards justice and peace in the world.*
- *Speak on behalf and in consultation with UCCSA officers/colleagues such that the prophetic voice of the Church is heard through their leadership.*
- *Oversee the proper management of finance, communication, administration and human resources of the Church.*

The General Secretary speaks on behalf of the Church in consultation with UCCSA Officers.

Person Specification

This position is not applied for. It is a call to ministry initiated by colleagues and members of the Church who see and sense particular gifts in an individual in relation to the fundamental elements delineated above.

The candidate must have at least ten years' experience as an ordained minister of the UCCSA and demonstrate evidence of work for justice through his/her ministry.

They should demonstrate ability to work with people of different languages, cultures, social background and nationalities.

The candidate must have a passion for justice, inclusive leadership, advocacy and the Mission of the Church.

The candidate should have at least a Master's degree in theology or its equivalent.

He/she should have experience/demonstrate capability in a management position and be able to manage beyond an immediate office environment.

He/she should be able to direct and enable team work within the office and in the structures of the UCCSA as a whole.

Be able to analyse and apply problem solving skills in a creative, enabling and challenging style.

Demonstrate exceptional interpersonal, presentational and effective communication skills, specifically showing sensitivity to the cultural values of others, their beliefs and differing styles of working; proficiency in the English language (whilst preference will be given to those who are comfortable in communicating in more than one of the languages of the UCCSA); writing reports and reflections, clearly and simply; making presentations to large committees and small groups; excellent listening skills and behaviour which encourages others to share ideas comfortably.



Organisational skills required include the management of one's own time and priorities and the management of others in and beyond the Brixton office.

The person must be committed to the **UCCSA vision** as stated above and passionately guard the unity of the UCCSA.

An ability to manage diversity and promote equal opportunities across all aspects of the UCCSA, involving gender, race, values, status and other differences. Cultural sensitivity is essential.

Salary

A commensurate salary package will be given to the successful candidate.

Contract

This successful candidate will be appointed on a four year contract, renewable once for a further 4 years by mutual agreement.

Recruitment Process

All nominations should be sent via the office of the respective Synod Secretaries. The person nominated for this role should be a member in good standing and should indicate by letter their consent to accept nomination.

All queries may be directed to the Synod Secretaries in the respective Synods.

The **Closing date** for nominations will be the **31st July 2013**.

Rev. Philip Strydom

SEARCH COMMITTEE CONVENOR

UCCSA ASSEMBLY UPDATE
The 37th Assembly of UCCSA will be held **18-24 September, 2013** at **St Joseph's Pastoral Centre in Mmbatho, South Africa**. The Assembly will be hosted by the Northwest Region and the South Africa Synod. Registration fee is R500.00. This year we host a special celebration farewell dinner for the General Secretary Rev Prince Dibeela who is completing 8 years of service. The Assembly Planning Committee has begun preparations for this year's Assembly and requests your prayers. Pray and plan with them by honouring special prayer days for the Assembly on **May 5, June 2, July 7 and August 4, 2013**. Look out for our special Assembly updates in upcoming issues of the Newsletter.



PRAY WITH US

"Lord, make us realize that our Christianity is like a rice field:

when it is newly planted the paddies are prominent, but as the plants take root and grow taller, these divided paddies gradually vanish, and soon there appears only one vast continuous field. So give us roots that love, and help us grow in Christian fellowship and service, that your will be done in our lives, through our Saviour, your Son, Jesus Christ.

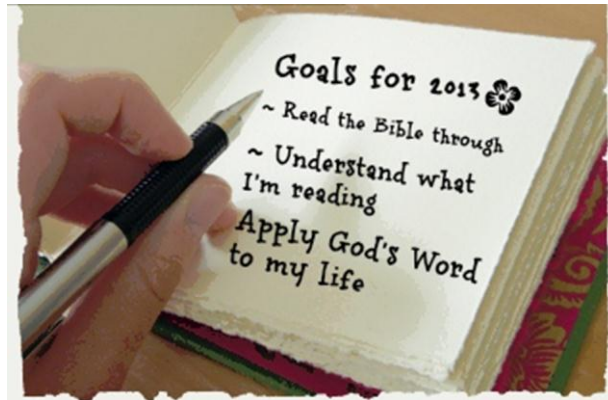
From the Philippines. A Procession of Prayers: Meditations and Prayers from around the World, comp. John Carden, WCC and Cassell, London, UK, 1998, p. 174.

Remember to pray for:

- Give thanks for the work and witness of those within the UCCSA family and throughout the world who stand with the poor and marginalised in communities.
- Pray for healing for people of the Central African Republic, Sudan, Syria, Egypt and those throughout the world who are victims of violence due to conflict and war.
- Pray for wisdom and strength for the officers, leaders, church, community workers of the UCCSA.
- Pray for the UCCSA Ministry & Mission Fund.
- Pray for the Assembly Planning Committee and remember the special prayer days for Assembly on May 5, June 2, July 7 and August 4.

*If you would like to submit a prayer request for publication please write to us at **UCCSA P.O. Box 96014, Brixton, 2019, Johannesburg, South Africa** or send us an e-mail at tellus.uccsa@gmail.com.*

*"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" James 5:16.
Prayer changes things!*



Have you resolved to read and study your Bible more this year? We encourage you to search the scriptures daily. Daily devotionals, Bible reading and even a daily dose of laughter can enrich your spiritual practices and nourish your soul.

Here are the Sunday Lectionary readings for May that you can use for your Bible reading in the new month.

Sunday, May 05, 2013

Readings:

- Acts 16:9-15
- Psalm 67
- Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5
- John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9

Sunday, May 12, 2013

Readings:

- Acts 16:16-34
- Psalm 97
- Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21
- John 17:20-26

Sunday, May 19, 2013

Readings:

- Acts 2:1-21 or Genesis 11:1-9
- Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
- Romans 8:14-17 or Acts 2:1-21
- John 14:8-17, (25-27)

Sunday, May 26, 2013

Readings:

- Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31
- Psalm 8
- Romans 5:1-5
- John 16:12-15



CONTACT US

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"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish."

John 6:9-11

**EVENTS To Remember and Pray For:**

1 May	Workers Day
2-5 May	Zimbabwe Synod Conference
12 May	Mother's Day
14-19 May	"Christ is Callings Us" Roadshow (Peninsula)
14-19 May	Justice & Transformation Training
19 May	Pentecost Sunday
26 May	Trinity Sunday



The History of May Day celebrated on May 1 as its origins in the labour union movement, specifically the *Eight-Hour Day* movement, which advocated eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for rest. During the 18th century companies attempted to maximize the output of their factories by enforcing the typical work day which lasted anywhere from 10-18 hours per day, six days a week.

One of the historic events of the movement was a strike demanding an 8 hour day involving 400,000 workers in Chicago that started May 1st 1886, often known as the *Hay market massacre*. Four of the trade union organizers were framed on false charges of throwing a bomb at police breaking up the demonstration. They were executed in 1887 and May Day became an international workers day to remember their sacrifice.

Today May Day is known as International Workers Day or Labour Day; and is a national holiday in more than 80 countries around the world.

UCCSA honours all workers and joins the cause and call for economic justice and just wages for workers in Southern Africa and the world. **HAPPY WORKERS DAY!**

