

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa Newsletter

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SCOTLAND - YOUTH EXPERIENCE ENLARGEMENT PROGRAMME :

Why do you feel that God has called you to be part of this?



Lisa from Zimbabwe:

"I believe that it is for personal growth in faith and to help the community with the skills I would have obtained in Scotland".



Meegan from Namibia: I may not exactly know why I have been called, but I believe that God has a purpose for me. I know I have to go to Scotland

and when I am there, I will share the love that God has planted in my life.



Nobuhle from KZN - South Africa : I believe I am a carrier of Gods vision. I have been chosen to create a fertile ground and plant a seed which God will fertilise and grow. I

am a messenger and carrier of His good news.



Wellington - UCCSA Youth Convener : For me this is the best exit package ever to this Youth Ministry, after 4 years of being a Convener this trip for me is a dream come true for our

Youth Ministry "see the need and arise" and the hope this partnership will continue even after this trip



Aroshel from Namibia: I am positioned where I am, I enjoy being here and I feel I need to be focused on the road ahead.



Thamiso from Botswana: God has personally identified me as a person who will plant a seed over boarders as the gospel knows no boarders; He wants me to make a difference, to speak a universal

language of Gods good news. I hope to go as I am and come back a different person.



A group consisting of 13 young people representing all the Synods of the UCCSA, and Rev. A. Arends will soon leave for Scotland on what is called a "Youth Experience Enlargement Programme".

This is in response to a visit dating to 2008 when Youth from Scotland came to the UCCSA visiting South Africa and Botswana..

The group leave for Glasgow on 4th August 2011 and the programme they participate in will begin on the 6th of August and end on the 29th of August 2011.

This opportunity strengthens and extends the existing partnership between the UCCSA and the United Free Church of Scotland. Our Churches have a long relationship. This visit enables young people to participate in this partnership by meeting together, fellowship and service to God through a mission experience.

Every phase of the Programme will be undergirded with worship to enable the team to grow in faith and in understanding their call to mission. The learning process of the Programme is focused on action-reflection. We believe that new Insights into mission arise out of practical involvement in mission followed by reflection.

At a recent orientation gathering held in Johannesburg to prepare the group for the adventure experience, they were asked:

What do you hope to achieve as a group? They responded by saying;

"We wish to build a team which will be a resource to the UCCSA through the skills and knowledge we would have acquired from the Experience Enlargement Programme. This learning experience will be a platform which we will be using as a tool of broadening our views and awakening new structures within the youth ministry which would uplift the UCCSA youth ministry in our respective local churches and Synods at large".

They further said: *"As much as we are looking forward to the journey ahead, we are aware that there will be elements that we will struggle with because we are opening a new chapter all together. We are representing the UCCSA and Southern Africa holding our mission statement with pride that IN CHRIST THERE IS A FUTURE. As young people from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique and Botswana we will be crossing new cultural boundaries through Yielding to Gods Will, and we sure that. God will never take us where the grace of God cannot keep us".*



Why do you feel that God has called you to be part of this adventure to Scotland?



Loreen from Zimbabwe : When the children of Israel came to the Promised Land, some of the elders had to proceed. I have been chosen to proceed, to go further than the others. This time God is fulfilling everything he has promised. I believe we are the team to go beyond.



Greyling from Namibia : God is preparing me, taking me out of my comfort zone. I believe the Lord is testing my ability to do His will, equipping me with the necessary tools and knowledge needed to be implemented in our local churches.



Jade – Peninsula Region RSA : God has a plan for me; Scotland is part of His plan to share the word of God. I believe I have something to offer and I am sent to make a difference to the youth of Scotland.



Desira Karoo Region RSA: Jeremiah 29 vs 11. This is all part of Gods plan, for 3 years I have acquired skill in preparation for such a time. Now my season has come, I am now a vessel to be used by God.



Zacharias from Mozambique: My feelings are different from Gods calling. I can't say why but in time I will see. But I wish to hear someone tell me that when I was in Scotland, I did my best.



MacMillan from Botswana : God has something for me; He has planted remarkable faith in me. God has placed words of motivation to offer to people. I believe I am part of a puzzle that rightly fits this purpose.

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KZN Region's UCCSA Women Take To The Street

Isililo/Manyano members in the KwaZulu-Natal Region of the UCCSA took to the street of Durban last week to make their voices heard and to show their presence in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

They were joined by ministers of the Region as well as members of the Soldiers of Christ.



God, How wonderful it is, how pleasant, to be healed of the corrosive disease of racism and separation; and to live as your people together in harmony. Your Spirit will then fill the hearts and the minds of all people.

Nobody will be judged any more on the basis of race or colour; but all will be ruled with justice and integrity. The war will end and the people together will rebuild the country.

There will be no reference to the colour of the skin, for all will be regarded as the people of God, the people created in your image. And this will be the beginning of what you have promised – the life that never ends.



UCCSA Ministry to Students at Nelson Mandela Metro University:

A decision taken by the 2009 Assembly held in Botswana to recognize certain areas of specialized ministry has allowed for an exciting ministry adventure for the Algoa Region in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

In November 2011, Rev. Bernhardt Lamour was ordained as a Student Chaplain with the responsibility of setting-up and sustaining a ministry to students at tertiary institutions in the Nelson Mandela Metro.



Rev. B. Lamour and Rev. B. Swartz

Bernhardt has done much this last few months in getting this ministry off the ground. The UCCSA student community, calling themselves "CONGSOC" consist of mainly South African and Botswana students.

North End Congregational Church and Pearson Street, two Inner-City congregations have the responsibility of supporting this ministry by being a home away from home to the out of town students.



Students Signing-up for Congsoc Membership

The ministry is growing with students from places like Francistown, Kanye, Molepolole and Gabarone interacting with our local churches.

UCCSA MUSIC and CHOIR DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY



Meet **OMPHEMETSE CHIMBOMBI** from Botswana. Omphemetse is the Convener in the UCCSA Mission Council Unit for MUSIC and CHOIR DEVELOPMENT.

She has a passion for church music and is totally committed to the continuous development thereof. She shares some of her thoughts and dreams regarding this very important area of our mission, ministry and witness.

Purpose of this Ministry:

The music ministry is one of the vital ministries in the church. It is through the art of music that one can heal, console, counsel, empathize, rejoice and above all spread the gospel of God.

The main purpose of the Music Development Ministry is therefore to cultivate and instill the culture of praising, worshipping and preaching in song throughout the entire church by engaging in focused music training sessions and workshops.

Proposed of activities for this Ministry:

The following activities are proposed in order to achieve the intended purpose:

- Ensure that the proposed structure of the Ministry is put in place and if possible maintain a uniform structure right up to local church level in all the Synods.
- Plan and organize a denominational conference in 2012 to try and unite church choirs throughout the denomination and encourage sharing experiences and spiritual and artistic growth strategies. The conference will take place every other year. · Hold denominational music festival every other year from 2011.
- Identify the needs of church choirs through Synod, Regional and local Music Development Conveners and/ or Conductors and determine ways of satisfying those needs
- Assist in establishing church choirs where they are non-existent.
- Develop existing church choirs through singers and conductors workshops and encourage collaborations and cultural exchange through Inter-Synod artistic activities.
- Encourage inter-organs music festivals at local church level, to instill the singing culture throughout the denomination.
- Facilitate the learning of hymns from the hymn books adopted by the church.
- Encourage creativity and innovation in music composition, arrangement and rendition.



CWM general secretary granted UK visa:



CWM General Secretary Rev Dr Collin Cowan has been granted a visa permitting him to live and work in the UK.

The move means Dr Cowan, who took up his post as general secretary in January

of this year, can move with his family from Jamaica to London and continue his role alongside secretariat staff at CWM's Ipalo House office.

CWM has welcomed the UK Border Agency's decision to grant the visa after a lengthy application process.

Dr Cowan's official start to work in London at the beginning of the year was compromised following UKBA delays in issuing CWM a Certificate of Sponsorship enabling him to apply for a three-year non-renewable visa.

The certificate was finally issued on 29 March this year.

Since January, Dr Cowan has been carrying out his new role from an office in Jamaica.

These difficulties have sparked concerns over the wider issue of CWM's ability to effectively employ international staff - and honour its commitment to recruiting a secretariat that reflects its membership - in the future.

Due to the fresh concerns, CWM's trustees were asked to reconsider the issue of the location of the secretariat - despite having made a decision to remain in London at their extraordinary meeting in October 2010.

The trustees are due to make a final decision on location when they meet in Durban, South Africa in June this year.

Dr Cowan said: "We are most grateful for the support of our ecumenical partners and initiatives of our UK-based churches, which have helped considerably to bring us to this place."

He added: "This has been a long process, but it is now over and my family and I can get settled in the UK in short order."

"Climate justice" new concern of Christian communicators

Christian communicators worldwide have been urged to lobby "climate justice" for those suffering the worst effects of climate change in Asia.

The call for churches to take a proactive stand and promote awareness of the issue through traditional media and among their congregations was made at a communications conference held by the World Association for Christian Communication's (WACC) Asia region in Indonesia.

In his keynote address, WACC president Dennis Smith said that for most of our local faith communities, climate justice was not interpreted through the Bible regularly enough, ENInews reported.



"What part does climate justice play in our utopian vision as followers of Jesus? What part does climate justice play in our proclamation of the Reign of God?" Mr Smith asked. He noted that "often the struggle for climate justice takes place on the margins of our world, in those precarious communities most vulnerable to the droughts and floods spawned by climate change. Extreme weather destroys roads and changes rivers that allow precarious communities to send their goods to market and gives them access to education and health care."

Communicators at the event, held as part of the WACC triennial assembly, were urged to adopt the concept of "climate justice" as they advocate for solutions that do not reinforce corporate control and consumerism.

Among the climate events reported at the conference were last year's floods in Pakistan, which affected more than 20 million people, and rising sea levels that are threatening to flood about 4,000 Indonesian islands.

"The WACC Asia region is committed to keeping climate justice high on its agenda," said WACC Asia president Samuel Meshack, who reminded participants that the Sunday in June that is dubbed Asia Communication Sunday will focus on climate issues.

After attending the conference, WACC general secretary Karin Achtelstetter said, "I very much welcome the ideas and proposals the Asia region has on climate justice."



Peace in Palestine Israel

Joint action for just peace convened by the World Council of Churches



The World Council of Churches invites member churches and related organizations to join a week of advocacy and action for a just peace in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who share the hope of justice shall unite during the week to take peaceful actions, together, to create a common international public witness.

How to get involved

During the most recent *World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel*, from 29 May to 4 June 2010, churches in more than 20 countries around the world sent a clear signal to policy-makers, community groups, and their own parishes about the urgent need for a peace settlement that secures the legitimate rights and future of both peoples. Participants planned their activities around the following three principles:

1. **Praying** with churches living under occupation, using a special prayer from Jerusalem.
2. **Educating** about actions that make for peace, and about facts on the ground that do not create peace, especially settlements in occupied territory.
3. **Advocating** with political leaders using ecumenical policies that promote peace with justice.



Why?

This annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to seek justice for Palestinians so that both Israelis and Palestinians can finally live in peace. It has been more than 60 years since the partition of Palestine hardened into a permanent nightmare for Palestinians. It is now more than 40 years since the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza overwhelmed the peaceful vision of one land, two peoples.

Yet the dream of one nation cannot be fulfilled at the expense of another.

The action week's message is that now:

- It's time for Palestinians and Israelis to share a just peace.
- It's time for freedom from occupation.
- It's time for equal rights.
- It's time for the healing of wounded souls.

it's time for palestine



World Council of Churches – Ecumenical Prayer Circle

**Week 23 : 29 May - 4 June 2011 : INTERCESSIONS FOR
Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland**

Give thanks for:

- Those around the world who worked for an end to apartheid and who continue to strive against racism in all its forms.
- Nelson Mandela, a beacon of hope, a leader who brought his people to freedom, and then gave up power as a model of democracy.
- The prophet Ntsikana, the first Xhosa Christian convert, whose witness led to the spread of the Christian faith among the Xhosa people in South Africa during the early nineteenth century. He wrote Christian music for his people and he preached peace.
- Those who care for children who have been orphaned by the HIV and AIDS crisis.
- Those who raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and provide services for those living with this disease.
- Those who dare to bring the issues of sexuality into the church in order to prevent God's people from dying.
- Songs which proclaim justice, freedom, and hope.
- Overtone singing, the ability to sing two notes at the same time, and the uhadi, a musical bow used to accompany songs.
- Ecumenical efforts in these countries as they seek to find unity and face political, social, and cultural challenges with a united voice of faith and witness.

Pray for:

- Stability and justice in the government, that all may receive fair treatment.
- Those who lead subsistence lives, who continue to live in substandard housing, are unemployed, who do not have access to safe water or sanitation, who suffer from malnutrition and the effects of drought.
- A fair distribution of wealth from natural resources so that it contributes to the general well-being, not just that of foreigners.
- Continued healing and rebuilding of these nations that have been torn apart on the basis of race.
- Land and educational reform, economic justice, and access to medical care for people of all colours and ethnicities.
- Women and children who continue to bear the brunt of poverty and are vulnerable to domestic violence.
- Young girls who have been raped in the mistaken belief that this is a cure for AIDS.
- Parents who see their children die of disease and malnutrition, and children who see their parents die of AIDS.

**Week 24 : 5 June - 11 June 2011 : INTERCESSIONS FOR
Angola, Mozambique**

Give thanks for:

- The United Nations, especially the World Food Program, and other organizations that work to assist the people of Angola and Mozambique.
- The churches, which continue to provide hope to people battered by civil war.
- The efforts to keep open dialogue between opposing communities.
- Farmers who risk planting fields even when landmines might be present.

Pray for:

- Rebuilding these countries devastated by civil war.
- Those who have been left homeless or who have fled as refugees.
- The tens of thousands of people who have lost limbs to landmines, and for all people who must deal with them for years to come.
- Children who have never known peace, who have been traumatized and victimized by war.
- A balance of rain and sunshine so that crops will grow.
- Greater supplies of food and lower prices, so that the poor are able to afford to feed themselves and their families.
- Those suffering from HIV and AIDS, their families, and their communities.
- An end to international debt bondage.

PRAYER

*We sincerely thank you, O God,
for your powerful gift of hope
in the face of seemingly hopeless situations.
We thank you for your peace
in the hearts and minds of men and women
in this part of Africa
who believe you are the living God,
quick to save in time of danger.
You reign above all,
directing the course and destiny of the universe.*

