

UCCSA 34th Assembly



Daily Assembly Digest – Tuesday 25th

40th
ANNIVERSARY
OF
SERVICE
AND
WITNESS



Some of the crowd and the banners at the sportsfield on Saturday

More celebration is needed here

If the Tiger Kloof Assembly in 1999, which marked 200 years of Congregationalism in southern Africa, was truly a singing, dancing, celebrating Assembly throughout, the 34th Assembly has been that only in part.

According to some delegates *Digest* has spoken to, the high point so far has been the Sunday afternoon united act of worship.

By contrast, the audience participation at the sports field (*pictured above*) was poor. Rev Bertram Swartz, Secretary of the Central Region in the SA Synod, felt that this might have been because of the event taking place outside, where sound dispersed and it was easy for attention to wander.

Another delegate pointed out that most of the congregational singing in the worship services was in English and Afrikaans, and that more songs in indigenous African languages could have been used.

That having been said, one older delegate expressed delight that generally, the worship at the Assembly had become more spontaneous and lively than it was a decade or so ago.

Hymn : The future lies in Christ

1. As darkness falls upon our lives and enemies surround us

Proclaim your everlasting love, our shelter and our strength

Chorus

For the future lies in Christ, tell the story to the nations

That he who reigns above is our only King and Saviour

2. We strive for constant fellowship, show us the way to go.

Create in us a clear heart, with everlasting joy
In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust, be Thou our rock and fortress

Deliver us from Satan's hand, draw nigh unto our souls.

3. We cannot chart our course in life without a strong foundation

The future is not our to know, only God will understand. **Words written for the Assembly by Andy Lamont**

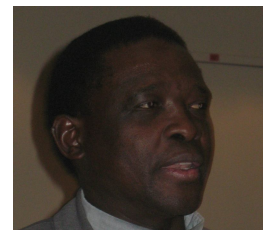
Leadership Academy seeks course writers

During the lunch break on Monday, ten people met with the Director of the Leadership Academy, Rev Majaha Nhliziyo, in order to explore the possibility of becoming course writers for the Leadership Training and Preachers' Training modules.

Explaining the process, the Director explained that those who undertook the task would not be asked to write all the course material, but would be given manageable portions of the course work to write.

In due course, there would be a day-long workshop to finalise the editing of the material to ensure continuity and an acceptable standard prior to final publication.

Rev Nhliziyo expressed his delight at the enthusiasm shown by the volunteers, which promised a high standard of written material.



Rev Majaha Nhliziyo

Listening team reports the good and the bad

On Tuesday afternoon, Rev Martin van Wyk of the Listening Team verbally presented the team's first report on people's experiences and perceptions of the Assembly.

Noting the positives first, he reported that delegates had expressed satisfaction with the accommodation and the high standard and variety of the food that was being served, particularly as it was always ready on time. The Kitchen staff were friendly.

The hosts at the various churches which received delegates at their worship services on Sunday had been welcoming and accommodating. Tours of the areas outside Oudtshoorn and George were especially appreciated.

On the negative side, Assembly members felt that signage in the town to Bridgton School was inadequate, and the reception they received after their long journeys could have been improved.

People expressed the belief that more business could have been done on the first two days, and that workshops should be that, not information sessions.

Robin Thompson presents his final Treasurer's report

After six years of faithful stewardship of the denomination's financial resources, Rev Robin Thompson presented his final Treasurer's Report to the Assembly on Monday.

He succeeded Mr Ivan brown of the Peninsula Region of South Africa.

Rev Thompson reported two significant changes to the funding of the UCCSA Budget. The first applied to 'designated funds, which, from 2008, will be used more effectively to support the needs of the UCCSA.

The second applies to the allocation of the CWM Self Support Fund for the denomination. Outstanding loans will be called in and the fund used to enable the church to realize the goal of self sustainability.

Before offering for ministry, Robin Thompson qualified as an accountant, and pursued a successful business career.

After completing his training, he was placed in the East Rand group of churches. After completing his internship there, he accepted a call to the Umbilo Church in Durban. After 12 years of service there, he moved to the Berea group of churches, where he has served for almost ten years.

Rev Thompson's skill was recognized by the wider church family when, in 2003, he was elected global Treasurer of the Council for World Mission, where he continues to serve as one of the organizations Officers.

In paying tribute to him, the Chairperson of the Investments Committee, Mr Solwyn Elephant said that the UCCSA owed rev Thompson a great debt of gratitude for the skill with which he had managed the sometimes scarce resources of the denomination when organizations were clamouring for more funding. He always dealt with people with humour and grace.



Mrs Cathy Bott and Mrs Carol Huffkie

New leaders for Women's Work

During the meeting of women on Saturday morning, the new officers of the Women's Work Committee took over from the outgoing officers from the Namibia Synod.

Mrs Cathy Bott is from the Algoa Region of South Africa. She lives in Port Elizabeth, where her husband in the minister of the Weiss Union Church. This is the second time she has held the office of President in the organization, having previously served in 1993. As Convenor of the Liturgy and Worship Unit of the Mission Council, she also produced many worship resources for the church.

Mrs Carol Huffkie, who is the new Secretary, is from the Kei Region, where she and her husband Rev Royce Huffkie serve the Crouch Memorial Church in Queenstown. A highlight was the presence of women who had travelled from PE

Words to make you think....

The question we should be asking today is not "What did Jesus do 2 000 years ago" but "What is Christ doing today as Prophet, Priest and King?" Christ never leads to a place where he is not.

Dr Coenie Burger, during the Tuesday morning Bible Study.

Ecumenical visitor challenges the Assembly

An ecumenical fraternal delegate from the World Council of Churches, Mr Samuel Kabue, (pictured below) issued a stirring challenge to the Assembly on Monday afternoon.

Mr Kabue, who is blind, heads the Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network (EDAN), which is a programme of the WCC, based in Nairobi and hosted by the All Africa Conference of Churches. It was established after the 1999 WCC Assembly in Harare.

Its mission is to encourage the churches and society at large to address the concerns of people with disabilities. Mr Kabue pointed out that historically, people with disabilities have been a disadvantaged community, marginalized in both church and society.

EDAN calls for a change in the mindset of the churches. Disability discourse needed to be introduced into the churches. A paradigm change from charity to empowerment was needed.

Mr Kabue ended by asking what the church was doing to address the issue, and indicating EDAN's willingness to work with the UCCSA>



Just as we were together in the fight against colonialism, so we must be together in the fight for economic justice in Africa;

In December 2008 the All Africa Conference of Churches will come to the southern African region when it holds its Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique.

Rev Dinis Matsolo, General Secretary of the Christian Council of Mozambique

We must begin to ask what makes us African;

We must speak the truth, even if it makes us unpopular;

We must protect our children;

We must be like fingers on a hand, each different, but working towards a common goal.

Sunday preacher Rev Mottalepula Chabaku,

In Christ, there is a future