

## **Statement of the URCSA Executive on the COVID-19 pandemic and the use of vaccines**

**03 February 2021.**

The Executive of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa has taken note of the developments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. We share the trauma and grief of families in SA and globally who have lost loved ones due to COVID19;
2. We commend all families to the comfort and care of God's Spirit who dwells in us and pray that all will be strengthened;
3. We are encouraged that SA has received its first batch of vaccines and has earmarked it for our dedicated and courageous frontline staff, and in a second phase for people over 60 years of age;
4. However, we are alarmed that South Africa seems to be almost last to have received the vaccines, although some vaccines have actually been tested in South Africa. At the same time the developing world has to wait while rich countries are securing inordinate amounts while the rest of the world must wait. This is not only a tragedy but also morally scandalous;
5. We call on the developed world to exercise their conscience and treat the needs of people equally;
6. We encourage our members to accept and embrace the outstanding work of medical scientists globally - producing effective vaccines in record time and mass producing it to make it cost-effective for poor countries, and we view this research as testament to the gifts that God has given humankind;
7. We call on all our congregants to resist false information and seek only reputable sources of information about the vaccines when making a decision to be invaccinated;
8. We are deeply saddened and aggrieved that at this time of a major health crisis, so many of our citizens have abused the system of procurement and enriched themselves criminally at the expense of human lives. It is clear that the lack of transparency and accountability from government and the private sector encourage gross corruption and criminality;

9. The pandemic teaches us that South Africa has to address the democratic deficit and citizens have to demand far greater levels of accountability from everyone in public office;
10. We thank the Lord that the arrival of vaccines gives hope for the control and ultimate defeat of the pandemic.
11. We commend the communities of faith for encouraging their members and society to exercise the virtues of diligence, caution and respect for life and thereby contributed greatly to the containment of the virus.

**Thanking you in anticipation.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AA du Plessis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Rev AA du Plessis**

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