

**Report of the Support Ministry for Publication, communication and archives  
to the URCSA Synodical Commission (SC)  
in session at Bergkroon, Wellington on 01 - 03 August 2017**

Dear chairperson and members

**1. MEETINGS**

The ministry had two meetings since the last SC Meeting.

***Proposal 1: Noted***

**2. LUSBOOKSHOP**

**A. Debtors**

1. An arrangement of 12 months for instalments / payments was implemented to settle the arrears.
2. All outstanding accounts must sign a I O U ( only a few debtors comply with this agreement )
3. The bad debt is as follows : 5 years and more , 90 days and more ( find attached the list )
4. The total collection for the arrears : **R 128 962.46**
5. Find attached the list of the outstanding debtors

**B . Yearbook**

Gerrit Fortuin gathered the information for the Cape Synod yearbook and it will be available every year with the latest updates.

**C. Publications**

1. Church order were printed (400 Afrikaans and 300 isiXhosa ) . Another 300 Afrikaans were reprinted.
2. Acts of Synod 2014. We still await the final draft of the minutes of synod.

**3. CAPE SYNOD NEWSLETTER REPORT**

**Introduction**

It is with gratitude that we can report about the design, development and marketing of the electronic Newsletter for the Cape Synod. The main objective (in the absence of a printed church magazine like “Die Ligdraer”) was to create a platform where the Communication and Publication Commission could communicate with local churches/church leaders and to develop a cost effective digital space where commissions/ministries of the church could share news and post their reports, projects and articles.

The core mission was to develop an online communication tool that is similar (but different) to the “VrydagNuus” (Friday News) of the DRC Kaapland Synod where URCSA members church could read church news on their PC’s, Laptops, Tablets, Cellphones; etc.

**1. General Information**

**1.1 Name of Newsletter:** (URCSA) Cape Synod News

**1.2 Administrator/Project Manager:** (Rev) William McKay

**1.3 Contributors:** Church Commissions/Ministries / Online News

- 1.4 Editions:** We started the end of last year to experiment with the outlay, structure and content of the Newsletter. Currently we compile and send out at least one to two Newsletters per month.
- 1.5 Content:** At the initial stage we requested articles and photos from church leaders and Scribes/Chairs of Church Ministries/Commissions. This method did not work so well because we did not receive the articles/photos on time and most articles and photos had to be re-edited. We now complement this method by selecting and downloading articles/photos from national and international church websites or Face Book accounts. This way we are not dependent on Churches/church leaders to compile the final content of the Newsletter during the month.

**1.6 Language**

The policy of the Commission is to compile and post church news in all three of official languages (namely Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa). We have to admit that it is difficult to find isiXhosa articles to post. This will however change when we train local churches to design, manage and populate their own websites in any language (\*Refer to Point 3 below).

We also approached Rev.L. Plaatjie to assist to translate some of the main articles (e.g. Easter articles) from time to time. The Chairperson (Rev. Swelindawo) is also available to edit specific articles in isiXhosa where and when needed.

- 1.7 Target Audience:** URCSA congregations, members and ministers (mostly within the Cape Synod Region). Gerrit Fortuin at the LUS Bookshop is currently assisting us to compile email addresses of the congregations and ministering within URCSA. URCSA members and ministers as far as KZN and Namibia are also subscribing to the Newsletter.

- 1.8 Statistics:** At the initial stage we started with the congregations that are linked with the LUS Bookshop. The initial number was just over 200 Newsletters per month. As more people became aware of the Newsletter and subscribed online, the numbers grew to just over 300 Newsletters per month and we are expanding every month.

**Note:** According to SPAM restrictions and laws we cannot send Newsletters and Emails to random people that did not subscribe to the service. Spamming could cause that an electronic service (like the Newsletter) be blocked and even scrapped from the Internet. This implies that our members/ministers must personally subscribe to receive the Cape Synod News. Local churches could assist us by announcing and sharing the news with their members and to encourage them to subscribe to the Cape Synod Newsletter.

**1.9 Advertisements**

One of the biggest benefits of the Cape Synod Newsletter is the fact that LUS Bookshop can advertise every time a Newsletter is send out to the congregations. The strategic plan is to develop an E-Commerce marketing tool for the Bookshop and market similar advertisements space to other stakeholders and companies.

**1.10 Printed Newsletter**

There is an urgent need to print the monthly newsletter for church members who do not have internet connection at home. This is a budget issue that will need more research, planning and money in the near future.

**2 Special Training & Website Development for the Cape Synod**

**2.1 Website Designing & Management**

We discovered that there is a big need for an interactive website (with our own domain name) where ministries/commissions of the church could post their resolutions and projects. This is an urgent project especially in the light of the urcsa (vgksa) website that has been inactive and redundant since 2014. Two of the main reasons for this inactive and

redundant site are a) the fact that there is no Administrator to manage the site on a weekly or monthly basis and b) the church does not budget for Websites and Social Media tools and platforms.

In the light of this urgent need, the Commission is now planning to create an interactive, cost effective regional website for the Cape Synod with a part-time Administrator.

To make it possible from a financial point of view, we are researching an interactive (DIY) all-inclusive umbrella site with sub- divisions that could host all the information and projects of the Ministries/Commissions of the Synod.

Our plan is to invite the Ministries/Commissions of the church (e.g. Women; Youth Office; etc.) to take ownership of this strategy by co-managing and co-contributing to the content and divide the costs of the umbrella website between the group.

## **2.2 IT Training**

Members of the Communication and Publication Commission requested a training session for church leaders to create, design and manage their own websites and Social Media platforms (e.g. Face book; Twitter; etc.). In the light of this request, the Commission is in the process of planning IT training sessions for the Western as well as the Eastern Cape to train and empower Ministers and local Scribes to design and manage their own websites and Social Media platforms. It would be an additional benefit if local churches could also design and manage their own local websites where they could post their local news. It would be easier for the Administrator of the Cape Synod News to search and download church projects, articles and photos e.g. in any language (e.g. Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa) within these local sites.

## **3. PUBLICATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY**

The communication policy was presented to the Moderature in a meeting held at the church offices. The Moderature accepted it. The Commission encouraged the Moderature to comment through it on the political status of the country thought his has not happened at the moment.

## **4. WRITERS WORKSHOP**

The publication commission is planning upcoming workshops for the Cape Peninsula and Eastern Cape regions. We still waiting on the Cape Empowerment trust for the request for the funding of the workshops.

## **5. ARCHIVES**

The congregations still do not send the archival documents up to the Stellenbosch archives (ref church order reg 18 & 19 )

See attach report

## **6. CORPORATE IDENTITY: LETTERHEADS, E-SIGNATURES, BUSINESS CARDS**

Different letterheads will be required for the different persons, divisions, task teams, etc. The quote for the design by graphic designers amounts to R3840.38.

**Decision:** A generic letterhead should be used in the interim as the approval of the Letterhead can only be done by Synod. This generic letterhead will consist of a master's head that remains the same and on which writers can add their contact details and accompanying information at the bottom. The Pension Fund is a separate entity which obviously has to be its own letterhead.

## **7. CAPE REGIONAL SYNOD SESSION 2017**

The commission requests the SC to approve that members of the commission assist in the dissemination and transmission of information on Face Book and Twitter in support of communication from the Synod. The members of the commission attend the session and will also accept responsibility for communication and photos wherever possible.

In His wonderful service

Rev. X. Swellindawo (Chairperson)

Rev. LL Prins (Scribe)

Rev. Lulama Plaatjie, Ev. N Vinqi, Elders Busakwe and NL. Vers

Rev. William McKay (Administrator: Newsletter)