

14 December 2015

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Dear Sisters,

GREETINGS AND UPDATE ON CIRCLE ISSUES

The Circle is rising up! This is the good news that I would like to share with you dear sisters. Many of you have expressed concern about the status of the Circle. Thanks for your support and prayers, things are moving at last!

As some of the sisters are aware, the Circle Executive Committee (ExCom) participated in a Seminar at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa. The title of the theme of the Seminar was 'The Legacy of African Women Circle Theologians'. It took place on the 4th-7th November, 2015. The other objective behind the Circle Ex Com's convening at UNISA was also to enable us to hold our first official face-to-face meeting with a view to charting the way forward. Since their election into office in August 2013, the Circle ExCom faced many challenges and it was apparent that a meeting was urgent to push the Circle forward. We are grateful to Dr Fulata Moyo, the previous Circle General Co-coordinator for organizing two teleconferences for us prior to this meeting in Pretoria. The Pretoria meeting was the initiative of our sister, Prof Madipoane Masenya on whose shoulders we have been standing. Majorly, the funding for us to attend this Seminar was from the College of Human Sciences and the Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies at the University of South Africa (UNISA). To Aunty Anne we are very grateful.

Here below, kindly find some of the excerpts from the minutes of the meetings held each day at the end of the Seminar's paper presentation's sessions. This is to intimate you on the decisions we have taken and also on our vision on how to move forward so that all the efforts of our Circle's founding mothers would

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not have been in vain. We have taken time to re-examine the present state of the Circle and we have come up with ways of moving ahead.

These are our decisions:

The following matters were agreed on:

- a. appoint Professor Madipoane Masenya of UNISA as financial director of the Circle with immediate effect.
- b. appoint three signatories to the Circle Account held at UKZN, Pietermaritzburg. The three signatories will be Professor Madipoane Masenya, Prof Helen Labeodan and Dr Nontando Hadebe. Any two of the preceding people can sign for the account
- c. authorize Professor Madipoane Masenya to withdraw the sum of ZAR10000.00 (about \$900.00) immediately to offset expenses incurred during the Seminar held at UNISA for the Circle from 5-6 November 2015. The current balance in the Circle Account held at UKZN, Pietermaritzburg has been confirmed as ZAR136 000.00 (about \$9065.00).
- d. transfer the Circle Account to UNISA.
- e. invite Professor Madipoane Masenya, Prof Isabel Phiri, Dr Njoroge Nyambura and Dr Musimbi Kanyoro to act as advisors to the Circle particularly in the area of fundraising and acquiring new sponsors.
- f. An invitation will also be sent to Circle mothers to invite them to contribute ideas, services and the possibility of mentoring upcoming scholars
- g. finalize constitution at the next general assembly of the Circle
- h. connect with sponsors and update them about what is presently going on in the Circle. There is also the need to get contact details of sponsors.
- i. appoint website manager in South Africa as soon as funds are released. Nontando already approached an expert - who will present a quotation in due course.
- j. Circle to have its own email address.
- k. The issue of absence of Circle Lusophone representation to be addressed urgently

Themes for next three years(numbering or bulleting the themes might work)

Africa at Crossroads: Religious Violence and Exclusion versus Religion as Social Capital

Sub themes:

LGTBIQ and Religion

Religion as social capital/human flourishing for peaceful, just and inclusive society free from fear and violence

Human trafficking, Religion and men/ masculinities?

Please feel free to engage with us on any of the points raised or to contribute in any way.

The regional coordinators will engage members on the themes as part of the preparation for regional conferences preceding the pan-African continental conference in 2018.

We would like to issue a newsletter for the beginning of 2016. We therefore ask you to update us on your published articles/books/chapters as well as other relevant milestones so that we can share with each other.

We are working on updating our database - please send us your full updated contact details and those of other sisters that you may know of, who might not have received this email.

Let  er to carry forward the mission and vision of the Circle.
Kind regards and wishing you all a merry Christmas and a blessed 2016

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