



## **Opening of the First Sitting of Parliament for 2016**

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***9 February 2016, 9.15 am.***

Honourable members of the Northern Territory Parliament, Madam Speaker of this Legislative Assembly, the staff, friends and guest, it is tremendous privilege for me to be here. I am humbled to assume this role, on behalf of the Uniting Church Northern Synod, to give a blessing to this first Assembly in 2016.

We are living in an exciting city. We are in an exciting time. We just heard the National Anthem, we will have the Chinese Lion Dancers blessing, and now you have an Indonesian-born minister to address the Parliament. We are in an exciting time because such diversity was not possible some years ago. Multiculturalism has been a success story of this city and the state. Our society has over the years managed to mingle all these different identities together. I feel proud to be citizen of this land.

Democracy is not just about the liberty of free expression, but also the public space to hold difference together. I believe this space is also within us – to feel equal and to share blessing with each other.

Today you have made this space with me, and I can foresee these deep values will be embodied in this house throughout the year.

I just travelled to Indonesia and arrived this morning and spent the Chinese New Year with UCA partner in the province of Papua and West Papua. Chinese New Year is one of the most celebrated weeks on the lunar calendar. My Chinese friend told me more than 1 billion people in China will travel within this New Year period. The reason for this annual movement can be summarise in one word – “ Home”.

People want a home; particularly the first generation migrants want a home away from home. On behalf of the Uniting Church I want to thank

the Parliament for remembering the early Chinese settlers in Northern Territory, by embracing their celebration.

Uniting Church respects our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. In the preamble of our Constitution, we call them the first people. They have shared the land with the second peoples. This generosity comes from this land. It is like a mother silently holding all her children in her empty womb. To our Aboriginal sisters and brothers I want to say “thank you, thank you for making me your daughter of this land”.

Madam Speaker, at the first Parliament gathering, I know you all look forward to work. This may be an assumption, perhaps I should say, members of this House are also ready to debate many agendas. Modern democracy is built on the Western system; it calls for transparency and accountability, despite all difficulties to follow the principle of truth telling.

Today as a Christian minister I want to share with you how to sustain the level of energy in the politics of truth telling. It comes from the unconditional love of God.

Inside love is blessings

Inside love is compassion

Inside love is humility

Inside love is taking responsibility

Inside love is self-sacrifice

Inside love is truth – telling

Inside love is endurance

Inside love faithfulness

Inside love is pure hearts

Inside love is growing together

Inside love is offering of the self

Inside love is to be born again to new life

Inside love is waiting in hope

Inside love is one, holding many together with blessings.

This is based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. May this ancient wisdom be my blessing to you today. May the love of God hold you together in the months that have not yet come to pass.

Let us pray :

Bapa di sorga, Bapa sumber ilmu pengetahuan  
Pyung-qua-wa, qua-he-e-ui. Sin-i-sin, ha-nile, kye-sin. A-ba-jo  
Chi-chi wa, teng-go-ku, nyil-imaz  
Mama-ill-ka-ring-ca  
God Bapa, Ni-ji-war-nguul  
Ta-ma-ra, are-i-ka-ra-wa  
Ta-mai kei-ma-mi-mai-lo-ma-langi

Heavenly Father, God of Peace and full of knowledge

Give wisdom to our leaders:

-to the Chief Minister, to the Opposition leader, to all the members of  
this Parliament ( staff) I ask for the blessing for the year of  
Parliamentary work.

May God pour out on you the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the  
Spirit of discernment and inner strength, the Spirit of knowledge and  
the true righteousness, that what is done here may build peace, justice  
and care.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy  
Spirit, be among you and remain with you now and forever.

Amen.

**Rev Thresi Mauboy Wohangara**

Moderator of Northern Synod UCA.