

Moderator's Report

Report 1

To say what we do is important, but it is more important to do what we say. To God be the glory! That this first year as the Moderator of Northern Synod has passed with the leadership and guidance of God.

Firstly, I would like to pay my respect to our Aboriginal Brothers and Sisters as they have shared their land with us, the second people. The generosity that comes from this land is like a mother silently holding her unborn child in her empty womb. So to our Brothers and Sisters I want to say thank you! Thank you for making me a daughter of this land.

The first task as Moderator was taking part in the Annual Synod meeting, and it had new responsibilities that I would never have imagined. It was difficult coming from a different background in language and culture, and having English as a second language to communicate in the large community of UCA. It was not only a challenge, but a time to test my loyalty and obedience to the Lord of the church. I'm extremely grateful for what God created as it is said: "you did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, the kind of fruit that endures".

Guided by these words, it was my privilege to represent the church in this Synod on various occasions and to participate in the activities of local, National and International activities especially with partner churches.

The feeling of fear, worry and thousands of questions came to mind in connection with this responsibility. However, everything vanished through lots of support, enthusiasm and encouragement either through advice, or by action. The President with his fatherly spirit and humility, as well as the General Secretary who wore serious faces and faithfully gave advice and help in many ways. Chair of PPNA with pastoral spirit, Support Worker of NRCC with love and prayers, and to all the Synod staff for their generosity and guidance in many ways.

Serving in diversity is the greatest force for us to show respect and appreciate one another with love as a binder. It is in diversity that God has fulfilled his promise. In accordance with the apostolic priesthood, we must teach all nations the purpose of service, the building and establishment of brotherly love for one and another, and one body many members with Christ as head.

The role of Moderator is to give general and pastoral leadership. The role also involves assisting and encouraging the expression and fulfilment of the mission, and being a witness of the church. In the past twelve months:

- There has been the establishment of relationships with NRCC by visiting the communities. We also shared stories with open conversations about happy times and joy in serving the Lord. We could feel through the dialogue the struggles and challenges of the communities. Through these strengthened connections, we worshiped together as God's family. We offered support for the translation of the Bible into local languages. During our visit, we also commissioned new youth workers and youth pastors.
- I attended the executive meeting, and providing guidance and pastoral formation on how to cooperate with both environment and their communities. They are now more open to the changes in the ministry for the glory of God.
- Establishment of relationships during the PPNA visit, and preaching and leading the Communion in congregations. Along with Chair of Presbytery, we held pastoral conversations with the congregations without a minister. Together we helped guide them in making decisions in terms of the church council. I led worship, such as revealing the Youth project of a garden.
- In the past ten years I have served as a member of the PR & PC.
- Creating relationships with Agencies and Schools, supporting and attending the graduation at Nungalinya College.
- Supporting and engaging with students in Bible Study for example: on Annual Synod Meeting. I also helped Somerville in programs to help the community by wrapping gifts at Christmas time.
- Establishment of cooperative relationships with other churches through ecumenical events. Firstly, vigil prayers such as **"LightTheDark"** for baby Aysa, and the welcoming of refugees in **"Let them stay"**. We also worked together with other organisations like DASSAN to march against the offshore detention of asylum seekers. Secondly, we marched with people against the uranium **"No fracking"**. On Palm Sunday we marched together for **"peace for refugees"**. As a member of the Northern Territory Council of Churches (NTCC) we had meetings with the Chief Minister discussing some matters as recovering after disasters, chaplaincy and public transport to and from the new prison. As well as other activities to demonstrate the love of God to all nations.
- During these past couple of months, I have also participated in government activities and functions such as: Christmas celebrations, the Australian Day Ceremony, Remembrance Day. Together we celebrated Chinese New Year and Harmony Day. The latter allowed collaboration between the Darwin City Council and Indonesian Consulate to hold a Q & A session titled: "Talking Harmony", of which I was a part.
- Most memorable, however, was being asked to address and bless the first sitting of parliament. As a Christian Minister, it was an honour to share how to sustain the level

of energy in the politics of truth telling. It comes from the unconditional love of God based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This is was an opportunity to preach the gospel.

- Establishment of relationships nationally as a member of the Reference Multicultural-Cross Cultural Committee to celebrate cultural diversity. It was a time that was meaningful. Being able to learn from, and accept one another with mutual respect. We are different and many, but one in serving the Lord. This was a new ingredient to enrich the life of our church.
- I also attended the Christian Unity Working Group.
- It is crucial to place more attention on international relations and at its core our relationship with the partner churches. The Northern Synod possesses a very strong relationship with partner churches in West Timor GMIT, especially with the Bible Translation (UBB) group. Last year I attended the launch of the Bible in the Amarasi language; a few years earlier than intended. Our Synod sent an ambassador from the NRCC to attend the launch of the Bible in Bahasa Kupang, Malay, Helong, Rote, and Tetun. The presence of the team helped strengthened the cooperative relationship between the two churches. I represented the National Assembly to attend the General Assembly of GMIT which took place on Rote Island.
- I travelled together in solidarity with UnitingWorld to assist the Asia manager to help update the MOU. I took some to visit the Christian University ARTA WACANA. I also took some to visit the church in Papua, and celebrate 161 years of the gospel being brought by missionaries to Papua's Mansinam Island.
- We also visited partner churches in the Pacific Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu. We held discussions about Transforming Encounters as well as Gender & Climate change. I attended the Women's and Men's fellowships of the Methodist church in Fiji. We had great conversations about gender justice and the empowerment of woman and girls. Later, I also preached at the Methodist church, and visited the Hindi community in Nanuku.
- We also had a conversation with the women in the Vanuatu Presbyterian Woman's Mission Union, and later visited a school in Onesua after a cyclone hit working together with the Presbyterian Church.
- Another exciting moment was when I attended the Uniting Woman conference in Adelaide. What a privilege and blessing it was to hear such inspiring and encouraging stories of hope from passionate and courageous leaders across Australia.
- The most valuable opportunity I had was meeting with all the Moderators which was hosted by the President. I consider this professional develop a valuable learning period to hear everyone's experiences.

Finally this is not the only thing to be reported for there is still much on the agenda.

From time to time there is a fire like spirit blazing in the hearts of the faithful and obedient we must continue to perform this noble work. I come to my prayer: "I never ask for opportunities, but pray that the Lord makes me ready when the opportunity comes."

Therefore, ***"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen***

Rev Thresi Mauboy Wohangara.