

CHURCH UNITY COMMISSION

***'that they may be one as we are
one – so that they may be
brought to complete unity.'
(John 17:22-23)***



1968 - 2018

**Historical Timeline of the
50 Years in the Search for Unity**



The Church Unity Commission was formed in 1968 when the Church of the Province of S A, the United Congregational Church of S A, the Methodist Church of S A and three Presbyterian Churches accepted an invitation which had been extended to all mainline South African Churches to engage in the search for union.

The Commission was immediately blessed with gifted and individuals of high prominence driving the agenda of church unity with the hope of establishing a United Church of South Africa.

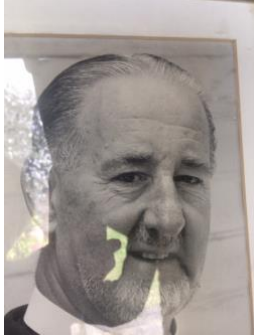
The Rt Revd Selby Taylor, who was the Archbishop of Cape Town of the Anglican Church SA became the first Chairman from 1968 – 1973.

Rev Prof John de Gruchy of the UCCSA was the first Secretary General. An internationally acclaimed ecumenist, he was instrumental in the drafting and adoption of "A Plan of Union" in August 1972, and the Agreement on Ministry that made it possible for each of the Churches to accept the ordination and ministry of the others.

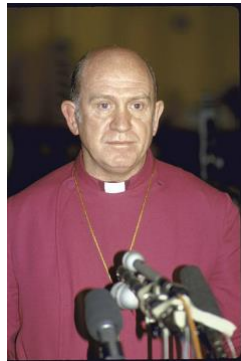
He was followed by another zealous ecumenist from the UCCSA, Revd Joseph Wing from 1974 until his retirement in 1989. He worked assiduously to facilitate joint congregations and the shared ownership of property. One of such churches, St Johns Benmore, celebrates 55 years



**Rt Rev Selby Taylor
Chair 1968-1973**



**Rev Stanley Pitts
Chair 1974 - 1987**



**Rt Rev Duncan Buchanan
Chair 1988 - 1999**



**Rev Paul Verryn
Chair 2000 - 2011**



**Rev Keith Griffiths
Secretary 2011-2018**



**Rev Prof John de Gruchy
Secretary 1968 -1974**



**Rev Joseph Wing
Secretary 1974 -1988**



**Rev Dr Donald Cragg
Secretary 1989 - 2003**



**Rev Alastair Rodger
Secretary 2004 - 2011**

During his sixteen years in office were highlights such as the Services of Commitment to the Search for Union held throughout the country on 24 November 1974, the publication "In Touch" and the drafting of the covenants relating to ministry and membership.

Joe Wing did not see the union for which he had toiled. But there had been progress. Relationships between the member Churches were far closer and warmer in 1989 than they had been in 1967, and this was in large measure due to the work of the Commission. Wing was always quick to acknowledge the contribution of others. It was indeed a team effort, but his personal contribution was outstanding.

Among this team were Revs Stanley Pitts and Duncan Buchanan who served as the chairmen.

Joe was succeeded by Re Dr Donald Cragg of the Methodist Church of SA who served until 2003.

Dr Cragg was always part of the team acknowledged by Rev Wing. He took the work further with acumen and high energy, with Revs Buchanan and Paul Verryn the chairmen during his term. It was during his time that the Mutual Acceptance of Ministry was finally ratified by the churches.

He was followed Revs Alastair Rodger of the UPCSA and Keith Griffiths of ACSA as secretaries.