

## CHAPTER 2

### CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

#### 1. REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND YOUTH

**Conference encourages** all relevant structures to have the representation of 40% women and 20% youth where it is applicable.

#### 2. CHILDRENS' MINISTRY

**Conference notes** the work of the Children's Ministry Indaba and refers the children's ministry emblem and curriculum to the Youth Unit for further refining, taking into consideration the 2008 Conference Resolution regarding children's ministry syllabus. The Youth Unit and other relevant structures should also consider the church logo and doctrinal aspect of the youth emblem and Sunday School Syllabus.

#### 3. CHILDREN AND COMMUNION

Subsequent to deliberations and concerns raised by the Children's Ministry on the issue of children and communion, **Conference resolves** to amend L & D par 1.26.7. by deleting the present bullet 1 which reads: "*Circuits and Societies may move at their own pace in admitting children to communion*", and replace it with bullet number 3 which reads: "*the decision as to when the child may receive communion should be made jointly by the children the parents, the leader or Sunday School teacher and the minister*" and refers the amendment to the Revision Committee and DEWCOM.

#### 4. YOUTH PASTORS

**Conference notes** with concern youth pastors' non-attendance of Youth Synod and urges Bishops, Superintendents and Synods to ensure compliance with the 2010 Conference Resolution (2011 Yearbook, page 99) regarding this matter.

#### 5. NAMAQUALAND INCLUSION ORANJEMUND

**Conference approves** the dissolution of Oranjemund Circuit (0133) and its inclusion as a Society of Namaqualand Circuit (0115).

#### 6. BLUEWATER BAY TRUST – PORT ELIZABETH CENTRAL

**Conference endorses** the decision of the Grahamstown District Synod that the Blue Water Bay Trust be dissolved and that the land and buildings used by the Blue Water Bay Church be donated to that congregation, and refers finalization of the transfer to the Presiding Bishop's Office and MCO.

#### 7. CIRCUIT NAME CHANGE

**Conference approves** the name change of the "De Aar/Hanover /Colesburg Trinity Circuit" (0516) to "The Upper Karoo Mission Circuit".

#### 8. SPIRITUALITY AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

**Conference reaffirms** its commitment to Christian Formation/Education and refers the matter of human resources with all financial implications to EMMU and MCO to report back at the 2012 Conference.

#### 9. RESOLUTION ON AGE OF RETIRMENT OF MINISTERS

**Conference reaffirms** the Miscellaneous Resolution no 1.19 in L & D page 231 which reads: "*Conference sets a normal, maximum retirement age of 65. Ministers who wish to continue beyond that age should apply to the Connexional Executive, which will involve a review of performance*" and **resolves:**

- a. that the entire second sentence of par 1.19 viz. “*Ministers who wish to continue beyond that age should apply to the Connexional Executive, which will involve a review of performance*” be deleted completely
- b. that no further applications for extension to serve beyond the maximum retirement age of 65 years be considered, and
- c. that ministers who are currently under invitation are only allowed to continue serving beyond their retirement age for the period not exceeding the end of their **current** invitation.

## 10. CANDIDATURE AGE

**Conference refers to Circuits Quarterly Meetings and Synods** for consideration that, as from 2013, candidates for the ordained ministry who are 50 years and older during the year of candidature should not be considered for reception into full time, itinerant ministry.

## 11. NON-ITINERANT MINISTRY

**Noting** the continued challenges relating to the growing number and training of the non-itinerant categories of ministry as well as the extensive research that needs to be done in this regard, **Conferences resolves:**

- a. to appoint a Task Team, with the approved terms of reference, to revisit the original ideas, aspirations and designed purposes of this category in the light of general and contextual changes and challenges in the countries covered by the MCSA;
- b. to place a 12 month moratorium starting from 2012, on the candidature of any persons wishing to candidate in a non-itinerant category for ministry; and
- c. appoints the following to constitute the Task Team: The EMMU Director (convenor), Bishop Gavin Taylor, Rev Purity Malinga, Rev Dr Ross Olivier as well as 1 ordained non-itinerant minister.

## 12. RESOLUTION ON CENTRAL METHODIST MISSION

Conference affirms the Refugee Ministry that is currently being done by Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg but recognises that it has now reached crisis level, posing danger to the very people the Church intends helping and that the condition of the building is deteriorating and is no longer suitable, and so commits to assist Central District in seeking a lasting solution to this matter.

**Conference further encourages** the Central District, through the office of Presiding Bishop and CMM to approach government, national, provincial, local and other agencies to also assist in the crisis intervention strategy.

## 13. DISTRICT TRUST PROPERTY

**Conference resolves** to increase maximum amount for building work and renovations without District Trust Property approval from R150 000 to R250 000

## 14. SUPERNUMERARY FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

**Conference reaffirms** its resolutions of the past years on this matter especially with regard to convening a series of District dialogue events relating to the Supernumerary Fund as soon as the current arbitration issues are concluded. The MCO is requested to give an estimation of ratios between the Supernumerary Fund contribution, the Supernumerary Fund Reserve and Church Reserve contributions clearly and respectively before Conference for the following year. Final ratios are to be distributed to Synods for the current year.

With reference to the 2008 Conference Resolution on the Supernumerary Fund contributions and in particular point 3, which states that the Church Reserve Fund may continue to receive contributions but may not utilize these funds. Having assessed the position over the past 3 years and noting the needs of the Connexion, Conference 2011 directs that the Church Reserve may now be utilized for purposes approved by the Connexional Executive.

## 15. PROPERTY RESOLUTION

**Conference reaffirms** the 2007 Conference Resolution authorizing the establishment of a Commercial Property Unit and a MCSA Property company.

**Conference directs** that the scope of the resolution be extended to include matters pertaining to glebe lands and possible alternative ways of insuring particularly historical buildings.

**Conference further instructs** the MCO to act on this resolution and submit progress report to the 2012 Conference.

## 16. CONNEXIONAL TRAVEL EXPENSES

**Conference directs** MCO to send a communiqué to Bishops, Circuit Stewards and Superintendents by the end of the year clarifying which costs are covered by the Connexional budget so as to enable Treasurers to budget accordingly for District travel costs.

## 17. CARBON FOOTPRINT

**Conference calls on the Methodist people** to significantly reduce energy expenditure and practice zero waste mentality and heart on waste (ZMHW) especially with regard to the following: Electricity, water, fuel, tobacco, litter, paper and food.

## 18. ARBITRATION: REV de LANGE

**Conference notes** the concern raised pertaining to the delay in finalizing Rev Ekklesia de Lange arbitration case and urges relevant parties to find ways of bringing this matter to closure.

## 19. RESOLUTIONS ON THE PALESTINIAN / ISRAELI SITUATION

Conference **directs** the Office of the Presiding Bishop to engage ecumenical partners and other social actors in formulating an informed response to the Palestinian/Israel conflict situation.

## 20. PUBLIC ISSUES

**Conference reaffirms** the resolution contained in par 2.19 of the 2011 Yearbook (page 102) regarding the Presiding Bishop's prophetic leadership in matters of public interest, advocacy and communication. **Conference further reaffirms** Miscellaneous Resolution 1.37 of the L & D (page 235) regarding Church Public Relations and calls on District Bishops and Superintendents to use the set guidelines in responding to public issues.

## 21. PEACE AND JUSTICE

**Conference notes with deep concern** the destructive nature of the attacks of the countries on their targeted enemies as well as suffering of God's people as a result of unjust wars and the suppression of Human Rights. Furthermore, Conference deplors the escalating conflict and violence erupting in the African Continent which brings about political turmoil, economic deprivation and religious intolerance.

**Therefore Conference:**

- a. calls on the councils of churches within our member countries to engage the AACC towards promotion of peace, justice and stability in the continent
- b. calls upon churches in these given areas to work together in seeking peace, justice and stability.

## 22. TRC REPARATIONS

**Conference expresses** profound disappointment at Government's continuing adherence to the closed list of the TRC identified victims for reparations benefits. The TRC itself appealed to the state to embrace an open and on-going process to provide reparations for all apartheid victims of Gross Human Rights Violation that meet the TRC criteria.

**Conference directs** the Presiding Bishop to write to the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Department of Justice requesting for an open list and transparency in the matters regarding reparations benefits.

## 23. **CRIME AND CORRUPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Conference deplores** the on-going crime, increased levels of violence and corruption in Southern Africa and therefore **resolves to**:

- a. call on all Christians and People of Faith to embrace values that exemplifies the principles of equity, mutual respect, love, dignity and the integrity of all people and creation
- b. call on Church leaders and churches to the teach the basic Christian values as expressed in the Holy Scriptures and its Christian summary in the call to love God, our neighbour and environment as we love ourselves so that these values can be inculcated in our in families, homes, schools, institutions and Churches; and
- c. call on government, commerce, business, the judiciary and all leaders of civil society to acknowledge and live out these positive values to overcome crime, racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance in order to promote social cohesion, peace and justice in the countries covered in our Connexion.

## 24. **THE PROTECTION OF INFORMATION BILL**

**Conference** recognizes the Government's responsibility to transform legislation from the apartheid era, especially in this case the Information Act of 1987.

However the Conference expresses its deepest concerns with clauses in the Bill which fail to protect whistle blowers; give power to public officials to determine classification of information, level of punishment for anyone who could be in possession of such classified Information and therefore welcomes and affirm the portfolio committee's decision to withdraw the Bill and urges them not to re-introduce the Bill until the offending clauses are compliant with the constitution's guarantee of rights of access to public Information.

## 25. **SEXUAL RAPE**

**Conference re-affirms** its condemnation of all kinds of rape in the strongest terms. It expresses its dismay at the increase in rape incidences in our Southern African countries as that is inhumane, un-African and un-Christian.

Furthermore, **Conference condemns** the use of the term 'corrective rape' when referring to lesbian rape and directs all Districts and Circuits to educate Methodist people on this subject.

## 26. **12<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF LAWS AND DISCIPLINE**

**Conference resolves:**

- a. to defer the publication of the next edition of L&D until 2013 to allow opportunity for adequate consultation with Circuits & Districts of the proposed changes;
- b. that the work of the Structures Committee and the possible changes to Connexional Structures may need to be incorporated in the next edition of L&D;
- c. that the contexts of the member states of our Connexion need to be carefully considered in the new edition of L&D;
- d. to encourage Districts to identify persons who will work with the Revision Committee for the purpose of facilitating discussion in the Circuits and the District on the proposed amendments to the L & D. Districts need to be held accountable to ensure that adequate consultation takes place at the local level regarding these proposed changes.

## 27. WESLEYAN EPISCOPACY

**Conference affirms** the work of DEWCOM that has already been done on the theology of the episcopacy in the Wesleyan context, as reflected in rubrics on the functions and office of the Bishop contained in L&D paragraphs 6.18 to 6.22, pp. 71-73; and directs DEWCOM to formalize this work in a statement on our Wesleyan understanding on the ministry of oversight, and that this statement be included in the next edition of L&D, through the Revision Committee.

## 28. TERM OF OFFICE FOR CLASS LEADERS

Conference confirms the importance of the function of class leaders, and the energy required in training such class leaders adequately.

**Conference therefore resolves:**

- a. that Class Leaders be appointed for a term of three years, and that they may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms;
- b. that Class Leaders who have served the said two consecutive terms may be reappointed after an interval of three years;
- c. that Circuits and Societies to provide adequate training for Class Leaders; and
- d. that the Revision Committee to amend par 7.30.2 and 7.43 of our L & D in accordance with this resolution.

## 29. CONNEXIONAL VENUES

**Conference notes** the inaccessibility of many of the venues of its gatherings, conferences, synods and conventions, as well as the growing trend of lavish venues being chosen for the hosting of church events and functions.

**Conference encourages** the use of accessible and cost-effective venues, using as far as possible the resources available at local church level in accordance with the principle of good stewardship and our mission imperatives.

## 30. SECTION 21 COMPANY / SETH MOKITIMI METHODIST SEMINARY

**Conference notes and accepts** the presentation by the President of SMMS with regard to the reasons why SMMS is a Section 21 company which are due to statutory requirements of the Council of Higher Education and the South African Revenue Service, as well as for tax-efficient fundraising reasons inter alia.

**Conference directs** the General Secretary and MCO, in consultation with the President of SMMS and the Chairman of the Governing Council, to clarify the governance relationship between the SMMS and the MCSA so that all in the Methodist Church can understand this relationship.

## 31. 'HOLY TRINITY'

**Conference rejects the notion** and suggestion made in the media that the ANC, COSATU and the SACP resemble the Holy Trinity and also rejects the notion that Christ was depicted as a communist. DEWCOM is requested to draw-up a doctrinal response.

## 32. INFANT BAPTISM

**Conference directs** DEWCOM to make the position paper on infant baptism available through the office of the General Secretary to all Societies, Circuits and Synods for discussion with the view of adopting this at the 2012 Conference.

**Conference resolves** to amend paragraph 1.12.3 and Par 1.14 of the L & D in keeping with the DEWCOM position paper:

*Para.1.12.3 : To a child who is in the care of parents, significant care givers or guardians, among whom one or more are members of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, instruction in the meaning of*

*baptism and guidance in the nature of the child's faith in Jesus Christ shall be given before and after the Baptism (see para. 1.14). When parents, significant care givers or guardians wish to have a child baptised in a Society other than that which they normally attend, they shall provide the minister officiating with the written approval of their own minister.*

*Para. 1.14: After the Baptism the parents, significant care givers or guardians of the child or the baptised adult, shall be under the special pastoral care of the Leaders' Meeting through the Sunday School or such other agency as the Leaders' Meeting shall appoint.*

### 33. LITURGICAL USE OF STOLES

**Conference reaffirms** the role of DEWCOM in guiding the church in doctrinal matters so that Conference can exercise its authority in respect of the doctrines of the church and their interpretation (see par 5.1. L & D, page 55) **and directs** DEWCOM through the office of the General Secretary to make available its document on the use of stoles to all Bishops, Superintendents and Ministers for study and practice.

**Conference further directs** that no clergy present a stole to un-ordained persons until Conference has given its liturgical direction on the use of stoles based on the DEWCOM guidelines and directions in the 2012 Conference. Until then, the practice of using stoles should be led by the guidelines given at the 1985 Conference.

### 34. INCLUSION OF MARGIANALISED PEOPLE

Noting the present Conference theme 'An Invitation to a Round Table' and the inspirational Bible studies at this Conference:

- a. **Conference affirms** its commitment to pastoral ministry to people living with disabilities;
- b. **Conference refers** the discussion on this matter to the Mission Unit and EMMU so as to come up with practical guidelines to assist Circuits on how best to implement the suggestions discussed in commissions in the spirit of this Conference and its current theme.

### 35. DISCUSSION ON MORAL DECAY

**Conference resolves** to task DEWCOM to develop a discussion document on the issue of morality as it affects the church and its prophetic voice.

### 36. ARBITRATION: PENSION FUND

Conference noting:

- that this matter is pending before the Pension Fund Adjudicator and the Internal Arbitration Panel,
- that the Pension Fund Adjudicator should make the decision on the matter before the internal arbitration takes place as it is the outside external body
- that the matter is a complicated one and needs expert understanding
- that the convenor of the internal arbitration panel insists that internal arbitration take place before the Pension Fund Adjudicator's ruling; and
- that the MCSA has come to a stalemate with its internal arbitrator and is considering an independent person to arbitrate the matter

**Conference resolves:**

- a. to authorize the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the MCO to inform the Convenor of the Arbitration Panel to wait for the outcome of the adjudication as it has a direct bearing on the finalization of the matter;
- b. that after being informed of the Conference decision and, in the event of him insisting on going ahead, then the MCSA will apply for an interdict stopping him from hearing the matter and the MCSA will appoint an external person to arbitrate the matter after the Pension Fund Adjudicator's ruling.