

CONFERENCE and CONNEXIONAL EXECUTIVE RESOLUTIONS: 2003-2010

CHILDREN

Childcare (2006)

The Connexional Executive resolved to continue in the partnership with NCH and the World Methodist Church Office.

CE agreed in principle to develop Childcare ministries across the Connexion for the next three years. The main focus would be:

- Support of orphaned, vulnerable children through the development of pre-schools, financial support and facilitating access to social grants and other services;
- Ongoing support and development of child residential services;
- Develop capacity for advocacy for children;
- Appoint full time person, funds permitting, (who will have a support team) to take responsibility for childcare portfolio
- To commit funds to the partnership budget, which will further facilitate the on going childcare programme.

CE further requested the Mission Unit and Youth Unit to work out financial and other implications of this resolution for final implementation.

Childcare (2007)

Conference affirms and notes with appreciation the work of National Children Homes (NCH) with Child Care ministries in the Connexion. The MCSA is grateful for the financial support NCH has given to sustain Child Care ministries and their willingness to explore possibilities of starting new projects in other District within the Connexion. Conference also notes with gratitude NCH's efforts to facilitate a broad based Connexional forum for children's residential services and commends the Standards Guide for Children's Homes Volunteers.

Conference directs the Mission and Youth Units to work with Districts and Circuits to facilitate the sustainability of child care projects beyond NCH funding.

Investment in early childhood development (2007)

Conference notes International research corroborated by a range of South African studies shows empirical evidence that quality early childhood developmental experiences produce significant social, economic and developmental benefits to children, families and communities, and that a child who attends a good early childhood development programme enters formal schooling:

- (i) More confident and able;
- (ii) More likely to proceed through school without repeating a grade
- (iii) Less likely to need remedial education
- (iv) More likely to get a job as an adult

Currently the South African Government spends 1% of the National Education Budget on Early Childhood Development.

In the light of the above information and in an effort to improve the education of all children in South Africa, Conference urges Government to redress this inequity by allocating funding for 0-2 years and 3-6 years in equal ratios to that afforded children in the foundation phase of school.

Conference acknowledges the need to investigate similar needs and opportunities in other countries within our Connexion.

Connexional Childcare desk (2008)

In an effort to give attention to the Conference resolution on establishing a Childcare Desk (Yearbook 2007 pg 52-53) and which was given further impetus by Conference 2007 (Yearbook 2008 pg 74), a wide range of consultations and visits, by the Mission Unit and National Children's Home (NCH), have taken place around the Connexion ... These consultations have revealed that a MCSA response to these care services and related concerns are outside the scope of the Mission and the Youth Units. Thus the consultations gave wide support for the 2006 CE resolution that a separate Connexional Desk for child care programmes be established. It is therefore proposed that:

- The Child Care Desk be located in the office of The Presiding Bishop in order to give due prominence and effect to the MCSA intention to be serious about its response to and care for children in need.
- A Draft Budget prepared by the Mission Unit be submitted to the MCO to explore funding the Desk from MCSA sources.
- The Childcare Desk post holder to be a member of the Connexional Board of Ministries.
- The Office of The Presiding Bishop, the MCO and the Mission Unit to be given the mandate to implement the 2006 resolution as soon as funding is available.
- Consideration be given to the strengthening of childcare work at district level.
- "The Guide to Standards of Care in Children's Homes" and documents dealing with "Care standards for Child Protection" be made available to Bishops for distribution within their Districts....

Children's ministry syllabus (2008)

Noting with concern that Districts are using different children's ministry syllabi, in an attempt to offer a Common Resource Material, **Conference resolves that:**

- a) The Cape of Good Hope which has already done substantial work in developing the current unfinished Connexional children ministry syllabus continues the development of Connexional Resource Material.
- b) The completed material must be sent to EMMU and DEWCOM for further input and development.
- c) The completed material must be perused by Districts with the intention of adopting it as a common Children's Ministry Resource.

YOUTH AFFAIRS

Youth Unit (2003)

Conference resolved to endorse the appointment of a full time coordinator with effect from 2005.

Conference further resolves that the Youth Unit should engage District Synods by providing a Description of the duties and criteria for such appointment to ensure that the appointment serves the real needs of Societies, Circuits and Districts.

Youth Unit (2004)

The Connexional Executive resolves to appoint a task team to consider the need for a fulltime Connexional Youth Co-ordinator, to make a profile of such a person and to determine his/her role and duties and further investigate possible means of funding for such an appointment. The task team to be:

One Bishop, a representative from MCO, the Youth Co-ordinator, two members appointed by Connexional Executive (with powers to co-opt). The report to be sent to Circuit Quarterly Meetings and Synods for the implementation of the 2003 Conference resolution.

Tertiary education for youth at Methodist Children's Homes (2005)

The Connexional Executive agrees that young people in Methodist Children's Homes should be assisted to obtain tertiary education and therefore resolves:

1. to ask the Bursary Fund to give priority to such children;
2. to request the management committees of Children's Homes to give special attention to this matter
3. to encourage Societies to respond generously to any appeals that may be made to them.

Youth Pastors (2006)

The Connexional Executive referred the matter of Youth Pastors entry requirements, accountability, training and remuneration to the Youth Unit to take the matter through the normal channels for formal approval before the recommendations are implemented.

Response to Youth Challenge (2006)

The Connexional Executive recognising the management challenges regarding the Youth Unit resolved to appoint one of the Bishops to oversee and enable the Unit to prepare a comprehensive, sustainable strategic plan of placing Youth Ministry at the centre of the life of the Church. The Connexional Executive further directed that the plan be informed by inputs from various youth formations of our Church and be submitted to the 2007 Conference, through the Connexional Executive.

Response to the Youth Challenge (2007)

- (i) **Conference notes** the concern of the Central District that a Curator, a Youth Advisory Board and a Youth Unit Strategy have been appointed and devised without any consultation with the young people involved, and resolved that in future no decisions pertaining to Youth should be taken without consulting this constituency.
- (ii) **Conference also notes** the concern raised by Natal Coastal District in response to the miscommunication of information pertaining to youth work and refer these issues to the Connexional Youth Structures.
- (iii) In response to the Youth Challenge (Yearbook 2007 pg 50) a strategic plan has been developed and **Conference recommends** that this document speaking to youth work be referred to quarterly meetings, youth structures and synods for possible adoption at Conference 2008.

Connexional Youth Leaders (2007)

Conference notes with appreciation the Presiding Bishop's suggestion to embrace young people by electing or appointing a Connexional Youth Leader and thereby drawing them into the centre of the church. **Conference recommends** that the suggestion be referred, along with the strategic plan, to the relevant structures within the church for report through the Connexional Executive to Conference 2008.

Education Task Team (2007)

In light of the Presiding Bishop's challenge in his address, **Conference recommends** the establishment of an education task team that will:

- (i) evaluate the church's current role in education across the Connexion
- (ii) review how we can utilize our schools throughout the Connexion, to train a new cadre of leadership and pursue our vision for healing and transformation.
- (iii) propose ways in which we can provide the relevant support to our present mission schools, taking into specific consideration those schools which lie outside the borders of South Africa.

Educational Task Team (2008)

Conference resolves to instruct this Task Team to investigate ways in which we as a Church can also reclaim our rightful role in governance and practice of schools, which formally were Church Schools, now governed by the Education Department.

Conference further applauds the progress made in a joint venture with the South African Department of Arts and Culture to restore the Healdtown campus as one of our centres of “educational and cultural excellence”.

Youth/Children’s Pastors (2008)

Noting the concerns around the recruitment, appointment and role played by the Youth Pastors, **Conference resolves** that:

- The Youth Unit design an operational recruitment and screening process to be followed across the Connexion, to ensure the appointment of suitable candidates for Youth development work in the church.
- Potential Youth Pastor Candidates must be full members of the Methodist Church in good standing, prior to appointment.
- EMMU design an appropriate training programme to standardize Youth Pastor Training in line with the Methodist Ethos.

Youth President (2008)

Noting the call by The Presiding Bishop to have a young person as part of the Highest Connexional Authority and the commitment by the MCSA on youth involvement, **Conference resolves** that:

- The Youth President be appointed at Conference 2009
- The Youth President shall have no executive power but shall represent the youth on ceremonial occasions alongside The Presiding Bishop
- The Youth President shall be a lay person of between the ages of 18-35
- This person shall be the member of C.E. and Conference and further be ex- officio in all connexional youth structures
- The person shall be accountable to The Presiding Bishop and have close working relations with the Connexional Youth Coordinator
- Elections for Youth President shall be as follows:
 - i. Youth Synods to nominate a name
 - ii. Endorsement of the name by General Synod
 - iii. Connexional Youth Conference to elect a candidate from the names forwarded by Synods
 - iv. Conference to finally endorse the name nominated by CYC

Changing the Connexional Youth Consultation to a Conference (2008)

Noting the sentiment of Conference (2007) [YBK 2008:20-21], I highlighted in The Presiding Bishop’s address, Conference resolves that the current Connexional Youth Consultation be changed from a consultation to a conference thus establishing it as an official discussion body of youth work within the MCSA, accountable to both the Connexional Executive and the Conference.

It would imply that:

- (a) CYC would refer issues to Connexional Executive / Conference and take relevant resolution from General Synods and Conference.
- (b) CYC would be presided over by The Presiding Bishop
- (c) One of the functions of CYE would be to plan and set the agenda and programme of the Connexional Youth Conference.
- (d) Connexional Youth Conference needs to convene before the sitting of the Conference of the MCSA.
- (e) The delegation to the Connexional Youth Conference should be reflecting the various youth formations that occur within our 12 Districts. In addition the delegation should also be sensitive to the age composition.

Challenges faced by young people (2008)

Noting the challenges faced by young people such as substance abuse, matters of sexuality and violence in

schools, **Conference resolves that:**

- Draft specialized programmes dealing specifically with youth development issues, such as identity crisis, moral values, HIV and Aids, Peer Pressure, etc.
- A programme be designed that will engage parents and young people in inter-generational dialogue to share experiences on challenges faced by all stakeholders
- This programme be on-going, sustainable and treated as part of the core business of the church.
- A concerted effort must be made to address youth issues by being part of the formation of clusters with other organisations.
- The youth leadership at circuit level must develop a plan with budget for such a programme and the successful implementation thereof.

Youth Pastors (2009)

Conference resolves that the training in youth ministry be formalized. EMMU is directed to provide the curriculum and identify training facilitators.

Youth President (2009)

Conference notes the invitation by the Presiding Bishop to establish a Connexional Youth President and refers the matter to the Connexional Youth Consultation for discussion and reporting to the 2010 Conference. Youth Synods are encouraged to propose the functions and duties of this office to the 2010 Conference.

Youth President (2010)

Conference resolves that the issue of the Youth President's duties be referred back to the Connexional Youth Conference for further engagement with the Presiding Bishop and finalisation at 2011 Conference. The Connexional Youth Co-ordinator is mandated to embark on an educational campaign regarding this and ensure that information is cascaded down to the Districts for discussion.

Connexional Youth Unit (2010)

Conference, noting the lack of positive role models in our society, calls on the Youth Unit to establish and develop youth mentoring programmes that would enable young people to live positive, life affirming lifestyles. This mentorship programme should form part of intentional, holistic and focused Christian Education as highlighted in the General Secretary's Conference report. This is to be distributed to Districts before 2011 Youth Synod for further engagement, and then sent to Connexional Youth Conference and 2011 Conference for finalisation.

Youth Pastors (2010)

Conference notes with disappointment and concern the minimal attendance of Youth Pastors at Youth Synods and urges Bishops, Superintendents and Synods to ensure their (youth pastors) regular participation at Youth Synods.

School/Education Chaplains (2010)

Conference resolves that School/Educational Chaplains be formed into a separate cluster under the supervision of a Principal Chaplain to be appointed by Conference.

Conference further directs the Revision Committee to broaden the Laws & Discipline chapter on Chaplaincy to include other Chaplaincy services.

Methodist Schools in Swaziland (2010)

Conference resolves that the Mission Unit, in partnership with the Highveld and Swaziland and Northern Free State and Lesotho Districts, investigate the feasibility of adopting the MCSA Mission Schools in these two countries as Connexional Projects.