

CHAPTER 17

DOCTRINE ETHICS AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Rev Purity Malinga

The work of DEWCOM encompasses engaging with current issues relating to doctrine, ethics and worship. These matters come to the committee in the form of resolutions from and through conference and/ or connexional executive. All documents produced and endorsed by this committee are available to be viewed or downloaded at:

www.mcsadewcom.blogspot.com.

1. MATTERS REFERRED BY CONFERENCE 2009

1.1 *Connexional Conversation on Infant Baptism* (Yearbook 2010 3.31, p.88)

Dewcom has produced a discussion document which was distributed to the 2010 Synods. The objective of the document is to stimulate thinking and conversation on our practice in a context where the structure of a family is fast changing and where few children are raised and presented for baptism by biological parents.

1.2 *Non-Itinerant Ministers* (Yearbook 2010 2.30, p.88)

This matter has been discussed. Noting that the initial intent of this category has shifted, and that the initial understanding was that this category would be reviewed after a period of time, Dewcom agreed to undertake, in conjunction with EMMU, to facilitate the review.

1.3 *Prostitution* (Yearbook 2010 2.15, p. 85)

Consultation with the Mission Unit for a joint strategy still to be done.

2. HIGHLIGHTS

2.1 *In Search of Grace and Truth.*

Dewcom celebrates the achievement of producing, as directed by Conference 2005, the study book entitled “ In Search of Grace and Truth- Christian conversations on same-sex relationships”. Samples of this publication were distributed at the 2010 Synods. It is hoped that the book will be profitably used by all Methodist people as they continue to engage in the conversation on the issue of same-sex relationships. The committee gives gratitude to the following members for their various contributions to the production of the book: Tim Attwell, Ray Alistoun, Roger Scholtz and Neil Robinson.

2.2 *Living Will*

The research paper that was done on behalf of Dewcom by Rev Ken Carr was adopted and it is published on the Dewcom blogspot.

2.3 *WCC document*

Dewcom received and studied the World Council of Churches draft document on “The Nature and Mission of the Church”. (NMC) This document was sent to all WCC member churches for critique and input. The aim for the WCC is to produce a convergence document

on the church, similar to the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) document. The committee found the document to be broad enough and to be accommodating of various church traditions. It proposes a clear difference between organic and participatory unity of denominations. It was felt that the document lacked interaction with Third World views on mission, but there was no objection to it.

2.4 *Theology of Mission Survey*

This survey received a very poor response from the circuits last year. It has been sent out to the Synods this year, at the request of some districts. The data received will be analyzed and final report presented at Conference.

2.5 *Tribute*

At its March meeting Dewcom paid tribute to its ex-convener and member, Prof. Neville Richardson who was attending his last meeting as he would be moving on to serve in the British Conference. Neville's wisdom and grace as he handled, at times contentious issues of doctrine, will be remembered for many years in the MCSA and in the committee.

3. CONTINUING WORK.

3.1 *Worship and Liturgy*

The work of producing liturgical material relevant to the Southern African context is continuing.

Dewcom continues to receive questions regarding the practice of clerical dress in the MCSA. There seems to be a growing concern about lack of uniform practice for a dress code by ministers and /or local preachers e.g. who wears a stole ? when? what color etc. Dewcom has done this work and those who have queries are referred to the document "Guidelines for the use of Clerical Vestments and Formal Methodist Ecclesiastical Attire"- on the blog.

3.2 *Definition of Christian Marriage*

This is work in progress.

3.3 *Climate Change*

Dewcom directs conference to the SACC document posted on the Dewcom blog. There is need to encourage all our members to be aware and to participate in caring for the planet.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE:

Purity Malinga (convener) Wessel Bentley (secretary): Paul Verryn, Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile, Bill Meaker: Phidian Matsepe, Sijadu Nkomonde, Neil Oosthuizen, Faith Whitby, Diane Moodie, Roger Scholtz, Sol Jacob, Lumka Sigaba, Diane Sundberg Dumisane Sikhakhane, Tim Attwell, Neil Robinson, Dion Foster, Peter Grassow, Ken Carr, Zodwa Kutu, Nomvuyo Mhlongo, Liphoko Majoe, Raymond Khumalo, Brian Jennings and Keith Vermeulen.