

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **MISSION UNIT**

**Rev Kenaleone Ketshabile**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The MCSA's Four Mission Pillars (Mission Strategy) continue to provide the framework within which the Mission Unit carries out its mandate within the Connexion to encourage and support our churches to live out our vision.

The Connexional Consultation of District Mission and HIV/AIDS Coordinators that meets every year, the productive quarterly meetings of the Advisory Board, constant interaction with the Bishops, working together with other Units and Connexional organizations and Orders and last but not least, the guidance and support of the General Secretary and the Mission Leader of the MCSA, the Presiding Bishop – all these forms of support and contributions have over this year made our mandate a lot easier, meaningful and, to some extent has had measurable impact.

Overall, the journey towards attaining our continuing transformation calls is a quest of many of our churches. There are still areas that need more intentionality such as deepening spirituality and recommitment to environmental justice. This will ever remain a challenge until such time as we have the resources to make available educational material and facilitate educational workshops, etc. in these areas.

#### **CHILDCARE DESK**

The Childcare Desk came into being in February this year with the appointment of Mrs Victoria Sikhakhane as the Childcare Desk Coordinator within the Mission Unit. The Childcare Desk of the MCSA was established to coordinate all children's work within the Connexion and lobby and advocate for the well-being of our children. Further, the task of the Desk is to review, revise and design policies for the MCSA programmes, to build a strong communication strategy within the Connexion that makes information readily available through traditional means as well as through technology and networking. As part of her tasks, the Coordinator has begun to visit Districts of the Connexion to introduce the work of the Desk to Bishops, hold discussions on good practice relative to childcare work, identify areas of need and collect knowledge of the programmes. Thus far, visits to the following Districts have taken place: Natal West, Natal Coastal, Grahamstown, Queenstown, Highveld and Swaziland and the Northern Free State and Lesotho.

A Support Group for the Desk consisting of Bishop M Vorster (chair), Rev Ketshabile, Pearl Moroasui, Barry Barnes, Carol Dyantyi, Hayley Walker & Steve Moolman has been set up. Its core function is advisory. Other functions of the Support Group are to become a sounding board to ensure there is support for what is being proposed and to ensure that funding for this work continues.

A Children's Policy group has been set up and they have begun the process of reviewing existing church policies for children's homes, programmes, volunteers and norms and standards. The group has made it its task to understand the new Children's Act and make sure

that all church policies are in line with it. The policy group will also engage Children's Acts in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland through consultative processes.

The Childcare Desk Coordinator has, since the beginning of her term of office, been involved in seeing to it that the needs of the children who were transferred from the Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg are met. This is an ongoing process of meetings with the various stakeholders. We can boldly say that the experience of the Childcare Desk Coordinator and the work of the Desk proved critical and industrious in this instance.

The Coordinator has also attended various meetings together with the HIV/AIDS Coordinator with regard to the Global Fund Round 9 Disbursement. Negotiations with regard to this are looking promising with regard to Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs). She has also started discussions with regard to setting up a small feeding pilot project in partnership with Stop Hunger Now. She is also busy compiling a database of people with expertise who are available to offer consultation on an ad hoc basis.

One critical milestone for 2010 is to begin conversations on childcare structures and policies at local levels so that the flow of reporting and communication from local churches to the Mission Unit is understood, accepted and adopted.

We are grateful to the Methodist Church of Great Britain for their partnership in the funding of this Desk. Mr Barry Barnes is part of the Mission Unit as consultant to the Desk and his position is funded by the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

## **HIV/AIDS**

We salute the local churches and organizations, who continue to throw their weight behind OVCs in various ways ranging from aftercare, feeding, school needs provision, psychosocial and spiritual support. We will be forever grateful to our long-time partners in this particular ministry, the United Methodist Church (UMC) Germany for the sterling work in support of the Connexional HIV/AIDS Desk as well as Ikageng Itireleng in Soweto. It was most moving when the then director for their mission, Mr Thomas Kemper visited Ikageng Itireleng at the end of 2009 and got to meet some of the children who have been supported through the UMC in Germany and who are now studying at the University of the Witwatersrand.

World AIDS Day events closed our year in 2009 on a high note. In the different Districts, local churches and Circuits commemorated this day, which starts on December 1<sup>st</sup>, with the primary focus of increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS and its impacts. Activities ranged from addresses and imparting knowledge by experts to testimonies by people living with HIV and AIDS, to fund-raising events. Some of these activities were featured in The New Dimension article for January & February 2010.

This year the consultation for Mission and HIV/AIDS Coordinators took place in March ahead of Synods and all Districts were represented. Amongst other things during this consultation, the attending HIV/AIDS Coordinators had a session with South African Organisation for Prevention (SAOP) on trauma counselling and Home Based Care support. This is the organisation which teaches people how to put the care-givers at the centre of our interventions. The Consultation heard of some of our best practices models including:

- The Highveld & Swaziland continues to replicate the Amcare best practice method through the establishment of new satellites. A new HIV/AIDS Resource Centre has been established at Heidelberg Methodist church.

- Natal West: The newly established Simunye HIV/AIDS Care Centre which was blessed by the Presiding Bishop and the Natal West Bishop early this year, came as a most needed asset in an area which is not easy to reach and therefore to resource. We look up to this centre to empower its satellites which are already in existence in remote areas which need to access all available support. Such facilities are always like oases in the deserts and they set good examples of bringing help where it is most needed rather than enjoying complacency in our comfort zones as long as we not the ones in need.
- Northern Free State & Lesotho: Liphiring Society and community in the Mafeteng Circuit has demonstrated a dynamic of community leadership and cohesion in their process of building a crèche for orphaned & vulnerable children who are presently using the MCSA church vestry. Community leader/chief personally participates in the construction and also organises the community and its youth to take turns in participating hands-on. Such embracement of a church initiative ensures ownership and community support of the project.
- Limpopo: Fountain of Hope: This treatment roll-out site at Pretoria City Mission in central Pretoria is proof that with determination we can take tangible steps towards ensuring an integrated response by making access to treatment possible in centres that offer service without being judged or stigmatised.
- Queenstown: Umthawelanga Centre for the Aged & OVCs. Progress is being made with a feeding programme. This project has been operating from the manse and has now acquired three stands adjacent to their premises for the purpose of expanding their services to OVCs and the Aged. The District Women's Manyano supports this project to the tune of R12 000 each year as their commitment to a worthy cause. They have also renovated and equipped a local disadvantaged school for differently-abled children, a gesture which has greatly transformed a school that was most needy and catering for a marginalised group.
- Grahamstown:
  - i. A good twinning/cross fertilization programme between Kingswood College, a privileged school with value-based education and local OVC (orphaned & vulnerable children) from an under-resourced nearby township facilitated by the ICDP Trust Centre and supported by the MCSA.
  - ii. Uitenhage Kabah Circuit has a standing item on HIV & Stigma at every funeral programme for awareness creation and distigmatisation.
  - iii. St Lukes Methodist Church in Uitenhage: Running a truly ecumenical project in partnership with St Francis of "Grannies Hospital Group" who support aged grannies affected by HIV as well as People Living with HIV/AIDS. It has empowered the aged and made them knowledgeable and able to respond to and manage the challenge of HIV/AIDS.

**VCT/HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT) at Synods:** In response to the 2009 Conference call for the continuation of VCT sites at all Synods for our "Know Your Status Drive", Districts had testing sites at Synods, some conducting a full battery of tests, where an overall check-up is done i.e. sugar, blood pressure and HIV. The response was seen to be improving. Districts registered improved numbers of Methodists who tested and "know their status". Our aim is to make available the services as a normal practice at every Methodist gathering. Some of our Synods intentionally created time for testing as part of their agenda and paused to give time for delegates to test, led by their Bishops and lay leaders. We highly commend such leadership by example, as such practises will filter down to local churches. We thank the provincial Departments of Health and other service providers who availed their services for

this drive, not forgetting the District Bishops, Lay leaders and Mission & HIV Coordinators who led by example by being the first to test.

**International AIDS Conference - Vienna Austria:** The Connexional Coordinator for HIV/AIDS attended and participated at this recent HIV conference in July. The prominent call was on

- The upscaling of access to treatment for all
- The needs & role of families in Home Based Care
- Issues of disclosure to children
- Circumcision as a measure for reducing chances of infection for men
- Cross generation sex as a behaviour that fans the increase of HIV infections
- Youth education on sexuality in order for them to make informed decisions
- Gender-based violence & HIV
- Women of faith & HIV
- VCT upscaling
- Self test - new approach

There were sessions around interfaith bodies and their role in HIV/AIDS ministry. These also offered opportunities to sit on panels with different faiths from different countries as well as networking. It was with mixed feelings that the conference learnt that HIV infections are on the increase in Europe, while in our region they continue to fluctuate up and down.

**Partnerships:** This year, a number of new beneficial partnerships have been forged with resourceful HIV/AIDS role players, including the Department of Health, Bristol Myers Squibb, South African Organisation for Prevention, Africare and the Global Fund.

**Training:** As a result of the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between three government departments and the National Religious Association for Social Development (NRASD), a forum for heads of churches, of which our Presiding Bishop is a member (see Presiding Bishop's address to Conference 2008 pg 13, para. 2 under subheading PARTNERSHIPS), our districts benefited from Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops for Home Based Care capacity building. These ran in different Provinces from August 2009 till March 2010 and total of 30 Trainers from the MCSA were trained. They are in the process of cascading the training in their Districts until June 2011 with the purpose of strengthening Community Home Based Care at the local level.

**Funding:** The funding for AIDS, TB & Malaria which the Global Fund is making available to the MCSA for a five year programme, starting in August 2010 will go a long way towards strengthening interventions to address the three issues. One of its conditions, however, is that we implement in one identified Province and strict reporting processes have to be followed or else the funding will be withdrawn immediately. We are still in consultation with the funders as well as NRASD as the Principal Recipient and coordinator for all approved FBO recipients. We are indeed grateful for this injection of funds into the HIV ministry.

Regardless of the many challenges at the local level, in the main, the MCSA is making remarkable efforts towards integrated implementation in response to HIV/AIDS. We have demonstrated that there is surely no limit to what we can do when the human spirit is moved. So far, our strength has made a mark in the area of OVC Care, Home-based care, feeding the

hungry, mobilization of resources (especially building infrastructure and human resources), and Love box distribution (which provides under-equipped care-givers with medication for treating opportunistic infections in people living with the HIV virus). The areas we still need to do more work in are prevention and reducing the personal and social impact of HIV/AIDS.

## **SAMVIM**

Southern Africa Volunteers in Mission (SAMVIM) was established in 1989 by Richard Bosart to support the MCSA in its “Volunteers in Mission” programme. The goal of SAMVIM is to identify projects and coordinate work teams from local and overseas destinations to help work on projects throughout the Connexion. Over the last 21 years, more than 75 projects have been completed throughout 11 of the 12 Districts of the Connexion. Many lives have been changed by the exposure the volunteers have had to the realities of “mission” situations.

SAMVIM again became part of the Mission Unit in June this year. As Richard Bosart took leave to return to the USA, where he continues to work in a fund-raising and volunteer coordinating capacity, John Mitchley took over as the South African SAMVIM Coordinator. We are deeply grateful to Richard for the huge contribution he made over the past 21 years and we wish him all the best for the future.

John has been on fact-finding trips to Mozambique, Swaziland and the KNB District. He is keeping touch with on-going projects as well as being on the look-out for potential new projects.

John is keen on raising the involvement of the local church in the work of SAMVIM and in volunteerism. To this end, he has visited and will be visiting local churches throughout the Connexion. He is looking to diversify the activities of SAMVIM so that not only construction-type projects are looked at.

Construction-type involvements have included digging foundations, laying blocks, roofing, painting and carpentry. In May 2010, a volunteer team of 12 Methodists from the USA joined the Methodists in Lomngeletjane, Central Swaziland circuit, to work on the ongoing construction of a Methodist school. Volunteer teams routinely engage with the local community by way of sharing spiritually and arranging activities with and for the children and young people in terms of sport and play activities and bible studies. Tree planting, landscaping and vegetable gardening are also engaged in at some of the locations as well as holding workshops on organic vegetable gardening. SAMVIM has also been instrumental in acquiring textbooks from Rotary International and delivering them to schools where they are needed.

## **STOP HUNGER NOW**

Stop Hunger would like to express appreciation to the Presiding Bishop for his guardianship of SHNSA during the application process as an NPO. The registration has come through and SHNSA is in the process of registering as a PBO and will soon also register with SARS in order to gain approval to issue Section 18A certificates so that donors may claim tax deductions.

Up until the end of July 2010, 253 480 meals were packaged with the annual forecast of 1.1 million meals by March 2011 becoming realisable.

Two major sponsors require special mention. These are First National Bank and Growthpoint Properties Ltd. FNB Volunteers adopted SHNSA as their Year-end drive. They have pledged to raise R1m for the programme for 2010. Embracing the concept of Ubuntu, FNB will sponsor each couple of volunteers to the amount of R2000 for four hours community service. In addition to this, they will match (Rand for Rand) each FNB Volunteer's purchase of merchandise or personal donation. FNB also donated 60 office chairs and 85 tables used for hosting events. Growthpoint Properties have provided the SHNSA warehouse free of charge from March to July and as of 1 August will discount the rental by 30%. In addition to this, they packaged 67 000 meals in support of Mandela Day.

SHNSA thank all who supported in any way. Many churches throughout the Connexion have participated in packaging events. The W.A. of Limpopo has adopted SHNSA for 2010. SHNSA has attended and received recognition in most annual Synods.

SHNSA has responded to many emergencies including three fires and one flood. 10% of the meals packaged are kept aside for MCSA disaster relief. These meals are usually retained by the churches packaging the meals for utilization for emergencies in their local regions.

Essentially the focus is providing meals through informal settlement schools and daycare centres with the objective of attracting children to attend school. Responsibility rests on the community to tend a permaculture garden, supplementing their SHN meals with fresh vegetables. Rev Phillip Bauser is assisting in the establishment of the gardens. FNB sponsored the initial development of the model at the Mooiplaas informal settlement outside Centurion.

Appreciation is extended to the Presiding Bishop for creating an opportunity for the MCSA to partner with Stop Hunger USA, Rev Ron Robertson who was instrumental in "birthing" SHNSA together with Ted Warnock of UMCOR, as well as our USA principals, Rev Ray Buchanan, Mr Rod Brooks and Mr Allen Renquist who provided much wisdom and support in rolling out the SA programme.

## **THE PULA FUND**

Conference of 2009 resolved that funds from the Millennium Mission Resource Fund (MMRF) and 10% from the Mission and Extension Fund (M&E) shall be combined "to form a Pool from which distributions may be made to Districts, Units and Connexional Projects" (see Yearbook 2009, p.82, para 2.10). Conference further instructed the Mission Unit Board to decide on the name of the Pool Fund. Arising out of the challenging, inspiring and theologically grounded Bible Studies which were led by the late Rev Dr Steve de Gruchy on the need to be good stewards of our ecological environment, particularly water, the Board named the "Pool", **Pula Fund**.

The total income for the Pula Fund in 2010 was R1 170 541.00 and the distribution to Units and projects to date are as follows:

Presiding Bishop's Contingency Fund:		81 000
Mission Unit:		150 000
Grants:	Communication Unit	55 000
	Christian Education Unit	33 000
	Ecumenical Affairs	13 200
	Youth Unit	13 200
	Order of Evangelists	60 500
Mission Area Grants:	Lesotho	313 180
	Mozambique	35 000
	Angola	18 000
	Malawi	18 000
	Namibia	21 000
Projects:	Modimo O Matla	30 000
	Soweto Methodist Community Centre	40 000
	Centre of Help (Indawo Yosizo)	40 000
	Clarkebury YMG (St Peters JSS Project)	40 000
	Laphumilanga Counselling Project	40 000
	Ncambele Multi-purpose Project	40 000

An audited statement of the Fund will be available at the end of our financial year.

### **MISSION NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2010 Yearbook. p. 84, para 2.13)**

#### **Mozambique**

On the 15 – 17 June 2010, the Mission Unit led a Connexional Team to engage with the people of Mozambique on the state of our work there and to seek possible future plans for mission growth and development. Here is a brief summary of the findings and proposals for the future.

- The people of Mozambique are strongly committed to the MCSA and its work. They will not unite easily with the United Methodist Church as a possible solution to their hardships.
- The MCSA is regarded as the Mother Church and there is openness to grow the Church throughout Mozambique. Currently Methodist work is confined to 200 km of the 3 800 kilometres from South to North.

- The MCSA in Mozambique should start using the Portuguese language to reach out to the young people and others who do not use and are not fluent in the vernaculars.
- The District is developing a 5-year mission strategy plan that will incorporate suggestions from the consultative process.
- The MCO in partnership with the District will develop and prepare a proposal for a plausible way of funding ministry and meeting the needs of ministers and ministry.

The Mission Unit will continue to coordinate the monitoring and evaluation of the Process of Engagement with the District, enabling all the Connexional stakeholders to identify areas of mission where they can make a contribution. This will be done within the context of the District's Five Year Plan Strategy and areas for development and growth identified by the stakeholders.

### **Lesotho**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010, the Mission Unit facilitated a similar process to the one that took place in Mozambique, but with a task team that was appointed by the Lesotho Mission Synod that took place earlier in the year before the NFS & Lesotho District Synod. Bishop A Motswenyane and Bishop L Mothibi were present. Bishop Z Siwa, who is also a member of the task team, could not attend due to other Connexional engagements. Mr John Schorn, the outgoing District Treasurer, was also part of the team to deal with financial aspects of the process.

#### **Outcomes of the Consultation:**

1. In accordance with the Conference resolution, use of R313 180.00 from the Pula fund was agreed upon.
2. It was noted with appreciation that despite the conflicts that have arisen in Lesotho as a result of the schism, our structures are still in place and that in all of our circuits, our work continues to be alive under the leadership of our ministers and lay leaders.
3. It was emphasised that the continued commitment and sacrifice of our ministerial leadership and the spirit of unity among all the circuits is crucial for the future of our work in Lesotho and a recipe to encourage the rest of the Connexion and our partners to join hands in supporting and strengthening our work in Lesotho.
4. Educating and encouraging the people of Lesotho to give in order to support their work and cope with their financial obligations is crucial. To this end, the District will initiate a process of financial management leadership training as well as auditing financial performance of circuits. It was noted that despite the absence of a minister in Mokhohlong, our witness is sustained through the commitment of lay people. We salute the women leaders of Mokhohlong for their spirit, resilience and enduring commitment.
5. Poverty has been cited as the greatest enemy of the Basotho people with a negative impact on the financial viability of our church there. Serious engagement will need to take place in response to this challenge.
6. It was noted that to date, there is no minister stationed at Maseru, save a retired minister, Rev. Dan Senkhane, who was asked to serve as care-taker minister until a proper appointment is made. Maseru is the capital city of Lesotho and the MCSA needs to regard this as a priority station. An on-going consultative process with all the stakeholders will ensue in preparation for stationing a minister there in 2012. The task team notes with appreciation the sacrificial services of Rev Dan Senkhane in giving pastoral care to our people in Maseru.



## **MISSION STRATEGY REVIEW (2009 Yearbook, p. 82, para 1)**

Conference of September 2009 gave the Mission unit the go-ahead to implement the plan that was presented before Conference for the Mission Strategy Review. The plan consisted of two phases:

1. Assessing how the Mission Strategy of the MCSA was communicated after the 2005 Conference resolution on the outcomes of the 2004 Mission Congress.
2. Assessing the impact of the MCSA Mission Strategy in our Connexion.

The first phase was kick-started in March 2010. It involved six Districts with interviews with Bishops, ministers, all District leadership structures and our lay membership. The exercise was based on a random sampling model. A complete report of this phase will be presented to the Presiding Bishop in due course. The second phase will begin next year.

## **JUSTICE, SERVICE & CITIZENSHIP DESK (2010 Yearbook, p. 83, para 2.12)**

Due to non-availability of funding, the establishment of the Desk has not been effected. However, discussions are ongoing between the Mission Unit Board, The General Secretary and the Presiding Bishop on this matter. A consultation will be convened in October in order to delineate and make clear what critical areas the Desk would need to give priority. Further, we are very mindful that many of our local churches and partner organizations such as Prison Fellow are already involved with issues pertaining to the work of the envisaged Desk.

## **STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT**

2010 saw the Mission unit staff increases by three people to seven. Victoria Sikhakhane joined us in February as the Connexional Childcare Desk Coordinator, John Mitchley joined when SAMVIM was incorporated into the Mission Unit and Bronwen Dawson joined as Office Administrator.

**The Mission Unit Advisory Board** for 2011 is to consist of:

*Bishop Gavin Taylor (Chairman)*

*Bishop Mike Vorster*

*Deacon Dr Vernon van Wyk*

*Rev Faith Whitby,*

*Ms Yoli Tashe*

*Mr Mbongeni Magagula*

*Rev Kenaleone Ketshabile*

We express our grateful thanks to Mr Ivan Samdaan, Rev Diane Moodley and Mrs Nombasa Hlathi for the invaluable contributions they made whilst serving on the MU Advisory Board.

Shalom.