

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

RESOLUTIONS OF CONFERENCE 2018

2.1 CONFIRMATION CLASS MATERIAL

Conference recognises the work that EMMU has done regarding the Confirmation curriculum.

Conference directs EMMU to revise the existing material for our current context so that a standardised Confirmation curriculum is accessible to all age and language groups within our Connexion.

2.2 STIPENDS OF PROBATIONERS

In the light of the Methodist principle that Ministers undertake to go where they are sent, and promise to go where they are needed most, and in the light of Probation being a time of preparation and formation for all Probationers, recognising that as an issue of justice and fairness, there is no reason why one Probationer's stipend should differ from another;

Conference resolves that from January 2019, all Probationers entering Circuit stations will, until they are ordained, receive a Standard Stipend equal to the Stipend Augmentation calculated annually with no additional stipend. A travel allowance shall be payable as per Yearbook if a Probationer has their own vehicle.

2.3 FUNDING OF TERTIARY EDUCATION CHAPLAINS

Conference notes the Mission Unit's ongoing work in development of models of ministry to tertiary institutions, which take into consideration accountability and resourcing. Furthermore Conference endorses a relaxation on the current rules of the Stipend Augmentation Fund, to allow extended funding.

2.4 RELATIVES OF MINISTERS HOLDING OFFICE IN SOCIETIES AND CIRCUITS

To maintain the integrity of prophetic voice on good governance, Conference strongly discourages the appointment of immediate family members as Society Stewards or Circuit Stewards within the Circuit in which they are stationed.

2.5 SOCIETY NAME CHANGES

In being asked to approve the name changes for various societies, it is noted that a request was made to adopt the name of a minister who is currently in active service in the Connexion. The Synod did not approve this name change. The Conference directs the Revision Committee to draft for inclusion in the Methodist Book of Order, a definitive policy for the naming of Societies and or church buildings.

2.6 CANDIDATURE

Noting the current process of Synergising the Rules of the Orders, Conference resolves that the age limit for candidature of the Order of Deacons be 50 years.

2.7 HARASSMENT OF WOMAN MINISTERS

In light of the 2017 Resolution of Conference 2.26, Conference resolves to amend the Harassment Policy by inserting:

To allow women Ministers a place to share their stories of harassment in a safe space, which will not preclude disciplinary processes or appropriate remedial action, a three Member Team shall (separate

from the Circuit structure mentioned in the Policy 5.2) be appointed by Synods to include: a Person with Psychology background, and a Supernumerary Minister to serve in receiving any complaints from Woman Ministers regarding any sexual advances or unacceptable or denigrating behaviour. The team which shall consist of at least two women will deal with such issues that are raised by individuals, in the same manner as Circuit teams do as per the Policy.

This clause will be included in the Policy by the Revision Committee.

2.8 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

In our endeavour to correct the marginalization of women in our leadership, Conference formally expresses its commitment to gender inclusivity and the embracing of the leadership of women in the church. Therefore, as from 2019 Conference will ensure that the Church shall appoint women to the offices of the Connexion including, Bishops, Presiding Bishop and General Secretary and Lay President, ensuring 40% representation is maintained.

If a District or the Connexion nominates or elects a man into such office at a time that less than 40% of its Bishops, Presiding Bishop, General Secretary and Lay President are women, Conference shall be required to make an appointment of a Bishop, Presiding Bishop, General Secretary or Lay President who is a woman.

2.9 REPRESENTATIVITY

Conference refers to Circuit Quarterly Meetings and Synods for report back and decision by Conference 2019,

that the following bodies of the MCSA shall be comprised of at least 40% women and 20% percent of youth (aged under 35yrs):

1. Society Stewards and leaders meetings
2. Circuit Stewards and Circuit Quarterly Meetings
3. Synods (including Mission Synods)
4. District Executives
5. Conference
6. All mixed gender organisations
7. All committees, commissions and task teams
8. Gender exclusive organisation are to ensure the 20% representation of youth

The Chairperson of all the above structures shall be responsible and held accountable to ensure adherence to the spirit and letter of this resolution. If in any of these organisations, structures or committees the representation is not met, the minutes of each of these bodies, shall include a strong motivation as to the reason why the representation was not attainable and in addition report each time to the District Bishop, Connexional President or Presiding Bishop, as appropriate. The report must include what measures are being explored to correct this imbalance.

2.10 FUNDING OF THE CONTINUING MINISTERIAL FORMATION

Conference resolves that, from the Mission Resource Fund, the Connexion will, as far as possible, contribute 70% to the cost of Continuing Ministerial Formation while individual ministers contribute 30%. At the production of evidence for the registration for the relevant course the MCO will pay the amount either directly to the institution or refund the minister. NOTE: This does not include the cost of further Academic studies.

2.11 DEACONS CONTRIBUTION TO THEIR TRAINING

In line with the practice that all who are trained for a particular ministry contribute a certain percentage towards their training cost Conference resolves that full time, itinerant Deacons are to contribute 30% of the cost of their training, effective from those who candidate in 2019. The 30% is repayable after Ordination. Conference resolves that the resolution to be Referred to Finance Unit.

2.12 AMENDMENTS OF BOOK OF ORDER CHAPTER 12

12.7.4- to be deleted

12.7.5 – to be deleted

12.10.1 – 12.10.5 – to be deleted and replaced by:

12.10 The Foundation Certificate in Ministry

12.10.1 The Foundation Certificate in Ministry (FCM) is a two year course offered by EMMU for Preachers with no formal education up to those who have Grade 5. This course is designed for people who are 60 years and older. Such preachers will be examined orally, once a year.

12.10.2 FCM Candidates shall be registered with EMMU, with proof of age. An exemption to do FCM for people who are below 60 will only be granted on provision of the following: an affidavit, a written declaration, relevant medical report in the case of learning difficulties or impairment and a Superintendents motivation.

12.10.3 Candidates will be tutored at the circuit/ district level using the EMMU prescribed Study Guides.

12.10.4 FCM candidates will be registered with EMMU before the 30th of June each year and will be examined during May of the following year.

12.10.5 An administration fee is payable for each candidate. Circuits can obtain the necessary Study Guides for each year from the Unit.

Conference resolves that the resolution to be referred to Revision Committee

2.13 WELLNESS POLICY FEEDBACK

Conference endorses the **Wellness Policy as proposed by the Human Resources Unit to Conference 2017** and refers the Synod responses to the Human Resources Unit for amendment & implementation.

2.14 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF RESOLUTIONS

Conference resolves that without moving away from our Missional Spirit, resolutions that come before Conference need to be accompanied by Needs Analysis for the Conference to make a decision.

2.15 FURLOUGH

Conference affirms the status quo regarding Furlough Allowance. The Minister's Convocations are required to discuss the policy of Furlough and Furlough Allowances.

Conference directs the Finance Unit to ensure compliance in light of the financial regulations (e.g. financial Services Board, SARS etc.) and to produce a document outlining the proposal of Furlough and Furlough Allowances to be taken the Convocation. Feedback to be provided by Synods to the Finance Unit for reporting to Conference 2019.

2.16 CONFERENCE COSTS

Conference resolves to create a Conference Fund to assist Districts going forward with hosting Conference. The Finance Unit is to draft guidelines for the usage. This fund will be resourced by an annual levy on every District (Synod) of R5000, to be reviewed from time to time by the Finance Unit Executive Committee.

2.17 SINGLE USE PLASTIC BOTTLES

Understanding the harmful effects of plastic, Conference affirms the call to heal creation and that no single use plastic bottles be used at any Methodist gatherings.

2.18 THE SOUTH AFRICAN LAND EXPROPRIATION BILL

Noting the Conference 2017 Resolution 2.20, Conference acknowledges the work done by the Mission Unit regarding this issue of land and encourages Districts and Circuits to participate in public processes on land debate, in consultation with the Connexional Trust Properties Committee.

2.19 MINING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Conference notes and affirms the work of the Councils of Churches in member countries of the MCSA in this regard. Conference directs the Justice Desk to collaborate with these entities to promote and advocate relating the issues of environmental Justice and human sustainability.

2.20 HATE SPEECH DURING ELECTION YEARS

Conscious of the resurgence of divisive and demeaning language, prior to elections, Conference reaffirms the inherent dignity of every person and therefore condemns any form of language or rhetoric that erodes the dignity of others.

We call on the members of the MCSA to publicly condemn instances of Hate speech, where the use of violence, torture, murder, vandalism, inciting violence and racism toward any race or culture of people, is advocated.

Furthermore, Conference directs the people called Methodist to familiarise and educate themselves and others on the contents of the Standing Orders of MCSA on Politics and Religion, Laws and Discipline 31, page 235/36.

2.21 RECALL ISRAELI AMBASSADOR

In the light of the current situation in Israel / Palestine, Conference supports the recall of the South African Ambassador from Israel and further:

Encourages continuous education to all Methodist People on the dynamics and sensitivity of the situation currently taking place in Israel / Palestine, and reaffirms the resolution of Conference 2013 on "Holy Land Tourism" (Year Book 2013 3.4 page 93-95)

2.22 YOUTH AND CHILDREN CENTERED CHURCH

Noting the directive from Conference 2017 to review and write inclusive liturgies, relevant to the spiritual holistic development of young people and children;

Also noting the 2018 Conference theme "Shaping Tomorrow- Today", with its specific focus on being a Child Centered Church, Conference directs:

SMMS to develop a compulsory extra-curricular module on Inclusive Youth & Children's Ministries for presentation to Conference 2019;

EMMU to adapt this module to be relevant for Youth and Children's Ministry, for all Methodist people who operate any pastoral oversight in the Church. (Including Ministers, Deacons, Lay Agents, Local Preachers, Children's Ministry Practitioners and Class Leaders);

DEWCOM, Youth and Ecumenical Affairs, to develop inclusive liturgies for Youth and Children's Ministry for distribution by the beginning of 2019.

2.23 NAME CHANGE OF YOUTH UNIT

Conference resolves to change the name of the Methodist Youth Unit to the **Methodist Children and Youth Unit**.

Furthermore, should there be a need to develop insignia, Conference instructs the Children and Youth Unit to consult with the Communications Unit.

2.24 INITIATION PRACTICES

Conference notes and affirms the Conference 2015 Resolution "*Initiation Schools*" and instructs DEWCOM together with the Justice and Service Desk of the Mission Unit to complete this work.

Furthermore, consideration be given to the effects of cultural practices that impact negatively on our communities i.e. male and female initiation.

2.25 EXPANSION OF METHODIST YOUTH UNIT CONNEXIONAL EXECUTIVE

Conference affirms the amended legislation regarding the Constitution of the Methodist Youth Unit and affirms that the Connexional Children's Ministry Coordinator be included in the Unit Executive.

2.26 THE TENDENCY TOWARDS AN EPISCOPAL PRACTICE WITHIN THE MCSA

Conference notes the confusion around the Office of the Bishop relating to the understanding and usage within the MCSA, which seemingly reflects three orders of Ordained Ministry rather than the two Orders recognised by the MCSA.

Therefore, Conference directs DEWCOM to produce a document that aligns our understanding and usage with our Polity, Theology and Ecclesiological Tradition, for reporting to Conference 2019. The document should include implications for the acts of Ordination, Commissioning and Induction and Vestments.

2.27 HARASSMENT POLICY PROTOCOLS

Conference recognises the value of the current Harassment Policy (appendix 15 of Laws and Discipline) and also recognises the limitations relating to legal implications, Methodist discipline, accountability, power dynamics, protocols and implementation. In light of these factors, Conference directs the Human Resources Unit, in consultation with the Mission Unit (Child Care and Justice and Service Desks) to revise the Harassment Policy of the MCSA, seeking legal advice if necessary.

Conference directs the Human Resources Unit to report the amendments to this policy to the special Connexional Executive, meeting in March 2019, for considering immediate implementation.

2.28 NZONDELELO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE COMMISSIONING

Conference directs the Revision Committee to amend the Nzondelelo Constitution to include:

“the Bishop of the District in which the Nzondelelo Conference is held shall preside over the induction of the office bearers.”

2.29 APPOINTMENT OF CIRCUIT STATISTICAL SECRETARY

Conference resolves that the office of Circuit Statistical Secretary be officially recognized and sanctioned by inserting a paragraph to this effect in the Laws and Discipline. Refer to Revisions Committee.

2.30 WESLEY GUILD CONSTITUTION

Conference accepts and affirms the request from the Connexional Youth Conference for the Methodist Youth Unit to amend the Wesley Guild Constitution. Thus, the Wesley Guild Constitution is referred to the CYC for amending to be brought before Conference (via the Revision Committee) 2019 for approval. The current Wesley Guild Constitution remains in effect.

2.31 MINISTRY TO CHILDREN

Conference resolves to amend the Laws and Discipline by inserting between point 3 and 4 of APPENDIX 3A: PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE PRESBYTERS' CONDUCT IN THE MCSA. Add "... 4. As Methodist Preachers, Presbyters are to conduct a ministry to children as John Wesley instructed:

'[W]e must meet them at least an hour every week; talk with them whenever we see any of them at home; pray in earnest for them; diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses. Some will say, "I have no gift for this." Gift or no gift, you are to do this, or else you are not called to be a Methodist Preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use every help God hath put into your way, in order to attain it. Preach expressly on the education [once a year]."

2.32 NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Conference notes with dismay that in the world at the moment there are 15000 Nuclear weapons, and calls on nations, especially in Africa, to ratify the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons treaty on 26 September. We applaud the South African Government for taking a lead in this matter. South Africa was the first country ever to de-commission Nuclear Weapons shortly after the Democracy was in place. 42 African countries have already signed and some have ratified it.

We join the voices calling on a minimum of 50 nations to ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and that the world follows Africa's lead, many nation of whom have already signed *The African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty* (known also as the Pelindaba Treaty) which entered into force on 15 July 2009. The idea of an African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (ANWFZ) originated in the OAU during the 1960s and becomes a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

2.33 FOURTH INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

Referring to Resolution 35 (Miscellaneous Resolutions, L&D 12th Edition Revised, page 237) and the African Regional Conference on Nuclear Disarmament and Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems held with members of 20 African embassies; Scientists; Ethic specialists and Religious Leaders present, from 16 to 17 August 2018, Pretoria, Conference notes with concern, that the advent of the fourth industrial technological revolution has given rise to technology that can harm us as humans.

Conference directs the Ecumenical Affairs Director to form a Task Team with representatives from DEWCOM, Justice Desk and Artificial Intelligence Specialists, for reporting to Conference 2019.

2.34 DISTRICTS TO BE CALLED SYNODS

The term, District, has been in use for many years by Methodist Connexions. However, the word in its definition refers to a geographic portion of a country. In the case of the MCSA, what we refer to as Districts, includes whole countries, and the term suggests that one country is a District of another, which is not what the church means or wishes to communicate.

Secondly, as the Church understands that its mission relates to areas of mission to be served by the church, delineated by missional possibilities and not geographic borders or boundaries, Conference resolves to replace the word District in the Laws and Discipline and move to the term Synod.

2.35 SYNODS RECONSIDER THEIR NAMES FOR CONFERENCE 2019

Conference resolves that all Synods reconsider their names for Conference 2019.

2.36 INTERIM MISSION SYNODS FROM STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

Conference resolves that Interim Mission Synods take place before Synods 2019 in the areas about to be established as Districts (Synods) in the following year, facilitated by the Bishops of those Districts touched by each newly formed District, to begin to do work in preparation, such as Names for new Synods, to feed back to Conference 2019 as Resolutions. Interim Mission Synods will be held before 2019 Synods for the new areas to be established in 2020. Interim Mission Synods will be held before 2020 Synods for the new areas to be established in 2021.

2.37 ADDITIONAL CONNEXIONAL EXECUTIVE 2019

Conference resolves that an additional Connexional Executive will meet in the first quarter of 2019 to facilitate the work of the District Changes.

2.38 FUNDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW DISTRICTS

Conference endorses the decision made by the Connexional Executive to employ the Church Reserve Fund as directed by the resolution of Conference 2017, for the project of assisting the establishment of new Districts with an amount up to R 1 million.

2.39 DISTRICT BOUNDARIES PROCESS

Conference 2018 endorses and resolves to appoint a Connexional Shaping for Mission Enabler (SME) for a 3 year term (2019-2021).

2.40 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW DISTRICTS

Conference resolves to establish new Districts effective 1 January 2019 and 1 January 2020 respectively:

- a. Conference resolves to establish effective 1 January 2020 the following new Districts: Karoo District, Namibia District and Botswana District and instructs the Connexional Structures Committee to facilitate the implementation of these Districts in consultation with affected Districts, Circuits and all units of the MCSA.
- b. Conference resolves to establish effective 1 January 2021 the following new Districts: Aliwal North District and Mpumalanga District and instructs the Connexional Structures Committee to facilitate the implementation of these Districts in consultation with affected Districts, Circuits and all units of the MCSA.

2.41 CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS

Conference resolves that:

- a. The Cape of Good Hope and Kimberly, Namibia & Bloemfontein Districts engage on enhancing and growing our missional footprint along the Orange River between the Namaqualand and Upington Circuits and report to Conference 2020.
- b. The Grahamstown and Queenstown Districts engage on boundary changes in respect of the Alice Region and report to Conference 2019.
- c. The Central, Kimberly, Namibia & Bloemfontein and Northern Free State & Lesotho Districts engage on boundary changes in respect of Kgatelopele (Wolmaransstad) for report to Conference 2019.
- d. The Clarkebury District engage on boundary changes within the District for report to Conference 2019.
- e. The Natal West and Natal Coastal Districts engage on possible boundary changes for report to Conference 2019.
- f. The Northern Free State & Lesotho District, Natal West and Clarkebury Districts engage on Lesotho and surrounding areas for report to Conference 2020.
- g. The Highveld & Swaziland, Limpopo and Mozambique Districts engage on Swaziland and possible boundary changes in respect of the proposed Mpumalanga District for report to Conference 2019.