

COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

2017

INTRODUCTION

- ◉ We live in an era of fake news- a time when lies are much easier to believe than truth- a period when every citizen is a journalist and acronyms have become a language all their own.
- ◉ Never has the need to bridge the perception gap been greater than it is now. No-longer can one survive on the fat of past glories but daily, we are called to prove our mettle.
- ◉ An identity/brand/ reputation created over centuries can be destroyed in hours

- ◉ Bell Pottinger is a case in point.
- ◉ The MCSA is a well respected brand in South Africa and beyond and as such we are grateful for the Presiding Bishop's constant prophetic pronouncements which go a long way towards keeping us accountable to the people we are called to serve

NEW DIMENSION

- ◉ We continue to print over 12 000 copies of the newspaper and we have grown our selection of columnists which in turn has cultivated the interest in the paper.
- ◉ We continue to seek ways of improving both the content and presentation. Please do not hesitate to email any constructive suggestions to Jodene@mco.org.za

STAFF

- ◉ The Unit is grateful for the numerous faithful correspondents throughout the connexion who ensure, monthly, that we receive their stories. The newspaper would not be the same without them.
- ◉ The Unit is also grateful for the support of a fully engaged advisory board under the leadership of the Presiding Bishop as the Chairperson.

PLEASED TO WELCOME JODENE
LOUW TO THE UNIT AS THE
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT



SOCIAL MEDIA

- ⦿ Not everything published on social media is truthful/ factual or well researched. Please check your sources before sharing.
- ⦿ We continue to caution against the use of social media in the spread of half- truths; misconceptions and for airing discontent.
- ⦿ We encourage the use of social media to propagate the communication of information that leads to constructive conversations that heal and transform.

- The Social Media Policy, which was tabled at CE is before you for acceptance.
- It is in the conference book for your perusal.

BRANDING

MCSA Brand / Identity policy has been tabled before CE and is now before conference for acceptance. The objective of this policy is to ensure clear and consistent presentation of the MCSA brand by

- ◉ Standardising the presentation of communications and key messages to all stakeholders' and publics
- ◉ Controlling the use of all church insignia/ logos/ to ensure high quality standards are applied at all times these are used
- ◉ Control the use of the church insignia/ logos/ identity in all marketing, communication

- The Methodist Publishing House and the Christian Connexion Bookshops belong to the MCSA.
- It therefore makes most sense that they become our preferred supplier of all conference and convention promotional material.
- They will work with registered suppliers to stock their shops
- The grace period for all those producing and selling promotional material with the church logos and insignia without permission from the church is now officially over

- Anyone found to be in breach of this and advertising stuff on Facebook etc. will be held to account.
- To this end, we will be seeking the assistance of all heads of organisations.
- Those wanting to work with the MPH as suppliers should get in touch with Deon Swanepoel deon@methbooks.co.za

SIGNAGE

- ◉ The privilege of travelling around the connexion has shown us how many instances there are where our church buildings have no signage.
- ◉ As a famous quote goes, "A business without a sign is a sign of no business"
- ◉ Your sign is your voice on the street
- ◉ McDonalds even before they break ground spend thousands on a sign.

- The sign on your premises is your handshake with the public, and that handshake is the first impression being made on potential customers.
- Often, people judge the quality of your business on that first impression. What is your sign saying to them? It is the first impression that you make on your potential customers/clients/.

Your sign should tell them who you are, what you offer, and where you are located

OUR SIGNAGE SHOULD HAVE



- The Shell logo prominently displayed with the wording The Methodist Church of Southern Africa
- The name of the Society and
- The Service times.

WEBSITE

- ◉ We are pleased to unveil a new website of the MCSA that has coalesced all Methodist related websites under one umbrella
- ◉ A website is as good as the content therein and we are dependent on organisations, units, Districts etc. to provide this information
- ◉ Ours is not to create the content but to upload it and keep the site relevant and up to date

- We have written to many of the leaders here present and I would like to request that you go through the website- locate yourselves, identify all the information gaps and make a commitment to send us this information during conference if you have it or soon after if you do not.
- We are all responsible for the impression we make to our external audiences

- ◉ Jodene will be liaising with all District office secretaries; organisation press/ communications officers/ weekly to get material to update both the website and social media.
- ◉ We urge all communications personnel for the districts and individual organisations to connect with us and send us information via email or WhatsApp.
- ◉ All we need, more often than not, is a good picture and a caption

RESOLUTIONS

LAWS GOVERNING PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE VULNERABLE AND CHILDREN

- ◉ *In light of our current policies on ethical communication, Conference calls on all Methodist people to desist from the practice of taking photographs of vulnerable people who receive assistance from the church and directs the Communications Unit in consultation with relevant units to further provide ethical guidelines relating to the protection of identity and dignity, surrounding the taking and use photographs.*

- Although there seem to be no legal guidelines, policies and/or legislation governing the photography of vulnerable persons in any of our countries, there are specific provisions in the Constitutions of all the countries of our connexion that advocate for the protection and upholding of the dignity of *all* persons.

- A photographer may take pictures of persons and or buildings in public areas. In this space, individuals cannot use the right to privacy as a defence against such pictures being taken in public areas - e.g. Park, Church gathering etc. This must be understood to be different to pictures taken in the private residence of an individual or a public space where reasonable privacy applies - e.g. Public restrooms, change rooms, etc. A disclaimer may be announced or printed at all conventions and conferences to say that photographs will be taken at the

- It is generally accepted to use images of people for personal or “fair use” purposes which include news, works of art, satire, politics, informational or educational purposes.
- Correspondingly, any person entering a position of public leadership, including the church, waives many of their rights to publicity and privacy.
- ***Therefore, unauthorized commercial use of an individual’s name, image, likeness, reputation, or other recognizable aspects of identity would be illegal.***

- ◉ Doing no harm and protecting children from harm is central to any media that involves them. Reporting on children and young people carries this added dimension and restriction, especially in the current era when it is nearly-impossible to limit a story's reach.

WE PROPOSE THAT A POLICY BE PASSED THAT STATES THE FOLLOWING:

- The dignity and rights of the vulnerable including but not limited to children, the elderly, those living with disability; the ill, the poor are to be respected in every circumstance
- **Human Dignity** is defined as an individual or group's sense of self-respect and self-worth, physical and psychological integrity and empowerment.
- The *best interests* of each child are to be protected over any other consideration, including advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of child rights.

- ◉ Do not publish a story or an image that might put the child, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are not revealed
- ◉ Avoid visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is *overwhelmingly* in the interest of the child.
- ◉ The photographer must have regard to the inherent dignity of his/her subject and seek to capture, use and distribute such images in a manner that is not inconsistent with the values of human dignity.

- Uphold the rights of all vulnerable people; be sensitive and accurate when reporting issues involving them and consider carefully the consequences of reporting any information governing them.
- We must be guided by the old adage- how would I feel having my picture publicised in those circumstances?

- I'd Like to thank Yolisa Mfaise and Jodene Louw for their help in researching the photography laws of all the countries of our Connexion

- ◉ jodene@mco.org.za
- ◉ bongi@mco.org.za
- ◉ WhatsApp : 078 131 5137