The Methodist Church of Southern Africa Communications Policy

AIM

This communication policy is geared toward the facilitation of the effective participation by the MCSA in various media activities, giving due consideration for pursuing opportunities and countering possible threats. In so doing, this policy further aims to assist the leadership of the MCSA - the Presiding Bishop and the General Secretary - to respond to public, doctrinal and national issues of a controversial nature.

Guiding principles

1. The vision of the Communications Unit is the effective communication of the MCSA as it prayerfully seeks to be an example of healing and transformation for Southern Africa, Africa and the World. To this end the Unit shall provide a service of communicating information to the office of the Presiding Bishop and all Units of the MCSA.

2. As per our Methodist usage the Presiding Bishop is the only spokesperson permitted to release statements and/or speak to the media on behalf of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. The Presiding Bishop may, at his discretion, designate the General Secretary or other person/s to speak or release statements on behalf of the MCSA. Such designation shall be applicable on a case by case basis.

3. Any media statement drafted by any person other than the Presiding Bishop or General Secretary must be approved for release by the Presiding Bishop.

4. The General Secretary has the authority and the responsibility – after consultation with the Presiding Bishop- to participate in media conferences, where such conferences involve public, doctrinal or sensitive matters.
5. All members of the MCSA—lay or ordained, and serving the MCSA in any leadership capacity whatsoever—are prohibited from releasing any statements in the name of the MCSA that may call the Church’s doctrinal and or policy decisions into question. Further, such members are prohibited from commenting in public media on matters that may jeopardise the image of the Church.

6. While District Executive Committees’ may decide to engage the media it is imperative that their communications accurately reflect the Connexion policies and decisions as the source. The District Bishop in his/her specific and designated district has the responsibility for accurate representation of MCSA policies, decisions and resolutions. The District Bishop shall, however, consult with the Presiding Bishop especially on contentious issues and any other matters that may invoke uncertainty through engagement with the media.

7. Whenever statements and/or media representations are made it is important to consider the consequences of the statement and or such representation may have on the Connexional image of the Church and its relation with other Christian denominations, the ecumenical family of churches and other faith communities.

8. Every effort shall be made to avoid statements that contradict earlier statements, resolutions or public pronouncements for the MCSA.

9. Media statements shall at all times promote both the Connexional and national interests of the MCSA.
10. Where differences of opinion exist between the Connexion and any of the Districts, the matter will be addressed through the traditional and Connexional (Circuit-District-Connexion) channels of communication and decision making. Should this method prove unsatisfactory for urgent communication responses, the Presiding Bishop has the sole discretion in deciding alternative approaches.

11. The Presiding Bishop and or the General Secretary may use their discretion to refrain from commenting on any issue/s

12. The Presiding Bishop maintains the prerogative to decide on any panel for MCSA representation at media conferences.

13. The communications Unit operates under the auspices of the Office of the Presiding Bishop.