

Conference 2018

Communications Report to Conference

The Presiding Bishop, Gensec, Lay President, Bishops, honoured guests and all conference delegates good afternoon

- **Shaping tomorrow today requires shaping ourselves so that we are relevant to the future that we are creating; shaping ourselves includes not only anticipating and planning for tomorrow but also acting on emerging opportunities. A number of these opportunities lie right in the middle of the internet of things and we need to be, today, more than ever, aware of the digital foot-prints that we leave behind. All our online activity is recorded and profiled as part of our digital footprint hence the reason why we need to be very careful about our online behaviour. Remember – despite the façade of anonymity that our smart phones, computers and social media platforms provide- someone is always watching and you do not want to shape a future in which your digital footprint will come back to haunt you.**
- **By its very nature, communication serves to move us from one state of knowledge to another; to shift our beliefs- shape new ideas and inform new experiences- however, effective communication remains one of the greatest challenges to organisational development especially when the organisation is voluntary and as fluid as the church.**
- **The Comms Unit is committed to sharing as much, timely information as possible to avert the sharing of half- truths and malicious-misinformation which can be damaging not just to individual reputations but to the church as a whole. Beware of sharing or posting fake news- remember the counterfeit is always made to look like the original- Cyber bullying is also not limited to adolescents- it occurs in the church as well- posts insulting individuals in the church or an organisation are tantamount to cyber bullying and unbecoming of any member of a discipleship movement. Such posts say a lot more about the individual posting, their maturity or lack thereof- than about the person they are shaming**
- **New Dimension- I would like to begin by apologising to all our valued subscribers for the erratic delivery of the newspaper this year. Because we are dependent on the post office for delivery of the paper we were gravely affected by both the go-slow at postal services which started in April and the eventual fully-fledged strike which started around June. This has created a back log in terms of deliveries and we have received several complaints from our readers. Coming up with a long term**

solution to this problem is something that the Comms unit Board will be seriously looking at.

- As we go into the future we are aware that websites are more and more becoming repositories of static information and all the fresh day to day information is going to social media. This said- I would like to plead with districts, organisations and units to provide us with the information we request- we are happy to keep the website up to date but we need the latest information from yourselves.**
- Crisis Communication- we have drawn up guidelines to help us to effectively deal with any flare ups in our connection. We encourage those who may find themselves dealing with conflict that can degenerate into a crisis, to please make use of the guidelines to help us with timeous sharing of information with all our stakeholders**
- Smart phones mean that citizen journalism is on an all- time high- please familiarise yourselves, your circuits and districts with the MCSA photography guidelines to reduce the temptation to be trigger happy, especially when working with the vulnerable.**
- Our unit has had requests about starting a tv station for the church and or a radio station- included in my report which is in the conference file are the potential costs of such a venture.**
- In the spirit of a youth and child centred church, my report also briefly refers to communicating with the youth and children**
- Finally, the staff at the MCO is there to serve the church but we are sometimes abused at the mouths of discourteous callers. Courtesy when speaking to anyone, even when you feel affronted, should be a matter of course whether its face to face or over the phone.**
- I would like to thank all the contributors to the New Dimension for their commitment; Bishop Zipho Siwa, the chairperson of the Comms unit board for his support and advice; the board for their availability and assistance; Jodene Louw for a year of hard work and of special mention, Edward Irusen, our Unit accountant who works long hours to ensure that our books are in order and Cindy Doubell, who after 8 years of designing the paper will be emigrating next year. We are grateful for her hard work over the years and we wish her and her family well.**

Bongie Moyo-Bango