

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa Conference 2019 Resolutions

1. CONFERENCE RESOLUTION REFERRED TO ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS –2018

Conference Resolves that the Ecumenical Affairs Unit continue its work on the 2018 Resolution -2.33 Fourth Industrial Technological Revolution, for reporting to Conference 2020.

2. AFFIRMATION OF THE 2014 CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

Conference affirms the 2014 Conference Resolution ("Miscellaneous Conference Resolutions" in the Book of Order: 17, pg. 227) and calls upon the Methodist people to exercise sensitivity towards the LGBTIAQ+ community.

3. BAN ON SINGLE USE PLASTICS

Conference notes that our mandate as stewards of creation is being severely compromised by the extensive use of single-use plastics. Given that globally, between 5.3 million and 14 million tons of plastic finds its way into the ocean each year (2015, Jenna Jambeck) and the alarming incidence of micro-plastics in every ocean and on every shore (excluding the land-based pollution); it is imperative that we repent from our destructive and life-destroying habits using plastics.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa therefore calls on the Governments of the countries within our Connexion to follow the lead of other countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and others and ban the use of single plastics in the spirit of the Resolution taken at 2018 Conference regarding plastic bottles.

Conference directs the Ecumenical Affairs Unit to call upon Ecumenical Partners & civil society to lobby against the use of single use plastics.

4. ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Noting Israel's ongoing ill-treatment and oppression of the Palestinian people, and the historic Prophetic role played by the Church and International Community in fighting apartheid, and any form of discrimination and injustice;

As an act of solidarity with the people of Palestine, Conference affirms the 2013 Resolution (2013 Yearbook, 3.4, pg. 93-95), and directs the Methodist people to boycott, disinvest and sanction all businesses that benefit the Israeli economy; that all future Holy land tours organised by Methodist clergy or persons affiliated to the MCSA, to boycott all Israeli operators and tours, and to deliberately seek out tours that offer an alternative Palestinian perspective.

Conference resolves that the Mission Unit establish a working team to develop awareness programmes, including the dissemination of the Kairos Palestine document, and conscientisation across the Connexion.

5. STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE

We, the Methodist people in Southern Africa have been on a journey in search for grace and truth with regards to human sexuality, marriage and family life. Our conversation, discernment and common experience have confirmed our commitment to our being a community of love and acceptance that celebrates the unity and diversity expressed in our Methodist spirit and Connexional existence.

To recognise the milestones on this journey, Conference 2016 affirmed "A profession of the MCSA's unity and diversity within the context of the Church's conversation on same-sex relationships" (Book of Order 2016:227-228). We also note the developments across the global Methodist family and in particular the work done by the British Conference on a Methodist doctrine of marriage. In light of this work, Conference notes the following statements from the British document as contributory to the MCSA's conversation of Christian marriage:

1. *The Methodist Church of Southern Africa recognises that there is a distinct difference between the legal definitions of marriage (held by the respective countries that comprise the MCSA Connexion) and the religious understanding that the MCSA holds. Primarily, legal definitions of marriage pertain to a form of contractual relationship entered into by individuals, describing the legal nature of their relationship and the accompanying determinations as set out by law. Whilst recognising the legal aspect of marriage, the MCSA believes that marriage is a covenantal relationship between two people, shaped and founded in God's love for them and that this love is expressed as a divine gift to each other.*
2. *Christian marriage is an exclusive relationship between two people who, united through God's Spirit, provide each other with a life-long commitment of love, affection, care, companionship, trust and faithfulness.*
3. *In a context where there are cultural, historical and socio-economic factors that have contributed to the fracturing of the family, there is a need for reconstructive work and pastoral focus on marriage and the emergence of new forms of family life.*
4. *As Methodist people we believe that married life is a vital means of grace for the development of individual, children and the strengthening of human society. The Words of the Methodist Marriage liturgy capture this goal of marriage, "Through such marriage children may be nurtured, family life strengthened, and human society enriched."*

See <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2019/>

Conference notes the work done by DEWCOM on an understanding of Christian marriage; and refers the matter back to DEWCOM to formulate a document for engagement at the 2020 Conference.

6. LGBTIAQ+ COMMUNITY TASK TEAM

Conference acknowledges with grave concern that for 20 years the "debate" about human sexuality and LGBTIAQ+ persons, in particular, has unfolded within the MCSA without seeking the deliberate input of the LGBTIAQ+ community. As a result, the "same sex debate" has, by and large, been dominated by divergent hetero-normative perspectives that have missed the nuances and dynamics of queer and non-heterosexual identities as well as the complex justice issues that confront the LGBTIAQ+ community in the church and in public institutions (such as, for example, violence towards queer persons, medical rights, adoptive rights, etc.).

Conference reaffirms its decision in 2018 that urged us as a Connexion to seek to create safe spaces for LGBTIAQ+ persons within the greater life of the church.

With this in mind, and noting the inherent prophetic nature of the Church to prioritise the voices of marginalised group/s in its journey toward seeking justice,

Conference directs the Office of the Presiding Bishop to set up a task team including LGBTIAQ+ persons and allies to listen, pastorally support and advocate for all affected persons, for reporting to Conference 2020.

7. BURSARY FUND

In response to the crisis of education in South Africa which resulted to the #FeesMustFall campaign throughout South Africa in 2015, the office of the Presiding Bishop convened a meeting. The meeting was held with the following: The Presiding Bishop of the MCSA, Connexional Children's and Youth Unit, Mission Unit and MethSsoc representatives.

Conference notes the need to resource education at tertiary institutions and therefore directs the Human Resource Committee in consultation with the Finance Unit, Mission Unit, Children and Youth Unit (with powers to co-opt if required), to undertake necessary feasibility assessment and propose solutions for reporting at the 2020 Conference.

8. WESLEY GUILD CONSTITUTION

It has been noted that the Wesley Guild constitution clearly identifies binary gender categories when describing membership and its uniform.

Noting that the church is still in conversation on matters of LGBTIAQ+ inclusion etc., Conference resolves to refer the discussion on Gender binaries in paragraph 7.1 and 7.2 of the Wesley Guild Constitution and replacing it with a list of uniform options, to the LGBTIAQ+ Community Task Team, to understand the implications of enforcing gender binary principles on uniformed Organisations, for reporting to Conference 2020.

9. FINANCES YOUTH UNIT AT SYNOD LEVEL

Noting the financial burden that is carried by MCYU in ensuring effective operations of the Unit at Synod level, fundraising for their budgets through children and youth who are majority unemployed, makes the mission and ministry of MCYU not to be feasible and effective.

Conference resolves that every Synod shall budget for Children and Youth Unit annually, the practice to be standardised across the Connexion that it is executed in all Synods.

Conference therefore resolves that Synods make annual provision for the Children and Youth Unit.

10. PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS FOR CMP's: -AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 8.10.8

8.10.8 "Children's ministry leaders and prospective Sunday school teachers must be properly screened, undergo psychological evaluations, be trained and should have the following qualities:"

Conference resolves that MCYU arrange workshops such as debriefs at Synod/Connexional Indabas.

Conference refers the issue of psychological evaluation to the Child Care Desk for further discussion, considering the financial implications in the implementation.

11. HARASSMENT POLICY OF THE MCSA

Conference adopts the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy as a draft working document, and directs the Human Resource Unit and Revision Committee to finalise the amendment to the Policy for adoption by the 2020 Conference, whilst the current Harassment policy remains in force.

12. THREEFOLD PATTERN OF DEACONS, PRESBYTERS AND BISHOPS

Conference acknowledges that the Theology of Ministry which was adopted in 2003 puts forward a threefold pattern of ministry (Deacon, Presbyter and Bishop) that is contrary to the twofold understanding of Ministry, Conference rescinds the 2003 definition and requests DEWCOM to make the appropriate doctrinal amendments as part of the discussion document for Conference 2020 (see DEWCOM Report 1.5).

13. YOUNG MEN'S GUILD REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD GATHERING

Conference, noting that the legislation as set out in the Constitution of the YMG (10.10) setting forth the number of members required to attend the Synod gathering differs from that which is set forth in the Book of Order (6.4.15), recommends that the Revisions Committee, in consultation with the YMG and other Organisations (if necessary), consider the following amendment to the Book of Order:

6.4.15 :... Delete: "the District President" and
 Insert: "and one other Synod Executive Committee Member".

14. COMMUNICATIONS UNIT REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD

Conference in recognising the increasing need of a Communications facilitator at Synod level who will circulate information about the life and work of the Synod within the Synod, tasks the Communications Unit in consultation with the Revision and Structures Committees to:

1. Develop the appropriate guidelines that would inform the work and parameters of the Communications Facilitator and
2. Advise on subsequent amendments to the L&D 12th Ed, Revised.
3. Consider the financial implications of such implementation.

15. AMENDMENTS TO ALL MCSA ORGANISATIONS CONSTITUTIONS

Conference acknowledges the need for all Constitutions of all Organisations within MCSA to comply with our current legislation with regard to the duties of Ministers: (4.73 – 4.77 and 7.40 - 7.41) and with the gender inclusive values and legislation of the MCSA. Conference refers this to the Revision Committee in consultation with the leadership of all Organisations.

16. NAME CHANGE OF DISTRICT TO SYNOD

Conference noting the confusion regarding the ecclesiastical interpretation of the word "Synod", tasks DEWCOM to develop theological input to guide the reflections of Synods and Circuits.

17. RE-NAMING THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN

Conference adopts the amendment from Chairman to Chairperson in the interim whilst Conference refers the "function" to Structures Committee for review.

18. GUIDELINES FOR NAMING OF METHODIST BUILDINGS AND ENTITIES

1. Any change or new name of a building or entity, must be approved by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting before submitting to Synod.
2. If named after a person it may only be done posthumously. This does not refer to buildings or entities which have been named prior to this guideline being adopted by Conference. The families of deceased persons are to be consulted.
3. Methodist Buildings or entities named after theological or biblical or ecclesiastical names or concepts shall be in line with Wesleyan tradition.
4. When a church located in a town where the town's name has changed and the church is named after the town; such church should reconsider the name.

19. COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND MINISTERS BE OUTLINED IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

Conference affirms the covenantal relationship between Ministers, Presbyters, Deacons, Order of Evangelism and the Connexion. However, we note the concern to clearly quantify and outline the expectations and parameters held within covenantal commitment and the need to articulate implications thereof for all concerned parties. Conference directs Revisions Committee in consultation with DEWCOM, to develop a theological framework that would speak to this need and advise on any amendments or additions to the Laws & Discipline.

DEWCOM is also directed to consider the covenant with its Sister Churches in the CUC.

20. LEGAL RIGHTS OF LGBTIQI METHODISTS

Preamble - Noting the foundation principle in the "Same Sex Debate" adopted by the 2001 conference of the MCSA, "that the MCSA seeks to be a community of love rather than rejection and the statement of belief accepted by the 2014 conference that any form of victimization, hatred or violence towards homosexual people should be condemned in the strongest possible terms. As well as the re-affirmation that the MCSA is not yet ready to apply for its ministers to officiate at same-sex unions because there is still a need for further conversation in relation to the theology of marriage, the exercise of conscience, pastoral implications and the perceived marginalisation of people in same-sex relationships ("Miscellaneous Conference Resolutions" in the Book of Order: 17, pg. 227)

Whilst recognizing that there are ongoing deliberations in the development of the theology of marriage within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Conference affirms that the foundational principle in the conversation about LGBTIAQ persons is the value that the "MCSA seeks to be a community of love rather than

rejection"(Conference 2001) and affirms the ethos & conviction of the 2014 Statement of belief (Conference 2014: L&D, p 227:17)

Conference acknowledges:

- that within in the South African context, the Same Sex Act (2006) makes provision for any citizen to enter into a legal Civil Partnership and as such upholds the legal rights of persons choosing this partnership
- that the legal provisions Civil Union Partnership are separate from the religious function of solemnising and blessing a marriage.

In light of these recognitions, Conference resolves, that while the MCSA continues its development on a theology of marriage, no citizen of a country within the Connexion that allows Civil Union, shall be prevented from entering into a legal Civil Union Partnership, which may include opposite sex couples or persons same –sex couples, presided over by an official of the department of Home Affairs, Magistrate or other official representing the countries within the Connexion that allow Civil Unions.

Conference refers the above to Synods for discussion and to feedback to Conference 2020 for decision. (L&D, 5.6.4: pg 55)

21. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

In our endeavour to correct the marginalisation of women in our leadership, Conference formally expresses its commitment to gender inclusivity and the embracing of the leadership of women in the church. 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 Synod 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 Leader who is a woman.

22. L&D AMENDMENTS & NECESSARY APPENDIX AMENDMENTS IN LIGHT OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP RESOLUTION

22.1. Inclusivity of Leadership

Add new point:

1.45:“The MCSA is committed to inclusivity and as such the gender balance among the body of Bishops, Presiding Bishop, General Secretary and Lay President will express this commitment therein that at all times no less than 40 percent of the Leadership mentioned above shall be women.”

22.2. Chapter 5 - OFFICERS OF CONFERENCE

5.7 Add after:“...according to the provisions of Appendix 10..

Insert : “ read together with paragraph 1.45.”

The Presiding Bishop:

The Presiding Bishop is the official head and chief pastor of the Church and shall exercise the powers, privileges and authority of that office subject to the directions of Conference and the laws and usages of the Church. The Presiding Bishop shall be a Minister of the Church and be elected according to the provisions of Appendix 10 read together with paragraph 1.45. The Presiding Bishop shall normally assume duty on the 1st January some 18 months after election and shall continue in the office for a five (5) year term, but is eligible for re-election for one (1) further term. He/she shall be inducted by the Presiding Bishop who most recently vacated the office and who is available.

22.3. APPENDIX 10: PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING A PRESIDING BISHOP

Insert under 1.: “When the Presiding Bishop to be elected is required to be a woman in accordance with provision s of paragraph 1.45, the General Secretary will make such announcement no later than 3 months before the election.”

Insert under 2.: “In the event that the Presiding Bishop to be elected is to be a woman in accordance with paragraph 1.45, the three (3) women who received the most votes in the first ballot of Connexional voting will be the names presented for voting in the second ballot.”

Amend 7:“The Synods shall then, if necessary, immediately vote again on the three (3) persons who secured the greatest number of votes in the first ballot, or if it is a woman who must be appointed, the names of the three (3) women who secured the highest number of votes; and transmit the result of the ballot to the General Secretary.”

22.4. Chapter 5

5.8 The Lay President:

5.8.1 Add after:“...to the provisions of Appendix 12.. “ **Insert:** “ read together with paragraph 1.45.”

Conference shall elect a Lay President according to the provisions of Appendix 12 read together with paragraph 1.45. The Lay President assumes office on the 1st January after election and holds office for a term of three (3) years, up to a maximum of two (2) terms;

22.5. APPENDIX 12**PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING THE LAY PRESIDENT**

Insert point after 1: " In a year that according to the provision L&D 1.45, the Lay President must be a woman the General Secretary shall communicate this with the Synod Secretaries by the October Circuit Quarterly Meeting in the year preceding the elections., Only female Minister of the MCSA shall be eligible

5.10 The General Secretary:

5.10.1 **Add after:**"...according to the provisions of Appendix 13.. " **Insert:** " read together with paragraph 1.45." The General Secretary shall be a Minister and be elected by the Conference according to the provisions of Appendix 13 read together with paragraph 1.45;

22.6. APPENDIX 13**PROCEDURE FOR THE ELECTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

Insert point after 2: " In a year that the General Secretary is elected, the General Secretary shall assess the number of women leadership and in the event that the provision of paragraph 1.45 requires the election of a woman, the General Secretary will announce at least three (3) months before the election that only woman Ministers in Full Connexion in the said election shall be eligible for election.

22.7. Chapter 6**6.11 ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF BISHOPS**

6.11 **Add after:**"...according to the provisions of Appendix 11 .."**Insert:** "read together with paragraph 1.45."

The following regulations and procedures shall govern the election and appointment of Bishops.

6.11.1 The procedure for electing a Bishop shall be in accordance with Appendix 11 read together with paragraph 1.45

22.8. APPENDIX 11**PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING A BISHOP**

Insert: After item 1: "At the time that nominations for a Synod Bishop are called for, the General Secretary shall assess the number of women in Bishops and in the event that the provision of paragraph 1.45 requires the election of a woman, the General Secretary will make such announcement to reach the circuits for the first quarterly meeting of the elective year that only nominations for women Ministers in Full Connexion in the said election shall be eligible for election and any for nominations of men will be disqualified in such an election.

Add: New point under new 2.:

"In the event that a number of Synods in the Connexion vote at the same time and a percentage of the Bishops to be elected must be women, the following process is used to determine which of the Synods will be required to vote for women Bishops;

The women in leadership in each affected Synod are counted as follows: Vice Chair; Secretary; Statistical Secretary; Lay Leader; Treasurer; Synod Supervisor of Studies; Mission Co-Ordinator; Ecumenical Affairs Secretary; Youth Coordinator and Superintendents. The Synod/s with the fewest women in leadership, as calculated above, will be the Synods who shall elect Bishops who are woman.

23. REPRESENTIVITY

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

1. Society Stewards and leaders meetings
2. Circuit Stewards and Circuit Quarterly Meetings
3. Synods (including Mission Synods)
4. Synod 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 Synod Bishop, Connexional President or Presiding Bishop, as appropriate. The report must include what measures are being explored to correct this imbalance.

24. YOUTH UNIT DIRECTORSHIP

Conference affirms the work done by CYC and refers to the Human Resource Unit the development of guidelines for the appointment of a Youth Unit Director in consultation with MCYU, such as qualification and a passion for youth work and relevant experience in youth work.

25. FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Conference refers to all Synods the proposal to publish Clergy Stipends in the Synod Blue Book, to include stipend, additions and travel allowance. For discussion and reporting to Conference 2020.

26. STIPEND AUGMENTATION FUND TO ASSIST WITH TOTAL STIPENDS OF STATIONED MINISTERS WHO ARE INCAPACITATED DUE TO ILL HEALTH

Conference resolves that a Minister incapacitated due to ill-health for more than two months, with necessary Medical treatment the Stipend Augmentation Fund may take over the payment of Stipend according to the Stipend Augmentation Fund calculation including Pension contributions for 3 to 12 months or as medically necessary during this time Stationing. This will be subject to the availability of funds in the stipend augmentation fund.

27. STIPEND AUGMENTATION FUND FOR MINISTERS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Conference resolves that the Stipend Augmentation Fund makes the Employer Contribution to the Pension Fund of Ministers in Mozambique. It further resolves that Stipend Augmentation for Ministers in Mozambique be increased by an amount equal to their member contribution to the Pension Fund.

28. AUGMENTATION OF PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS FOR MINISTERS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Due to the fact that ministers in Mozambique have not received the benefit of pension contributions in any form towards their pension fund accounts for nine (9) years, Conference resolves that all active ministers stationed in Mozambique who are on the pension fund, receive into their pension account, from the Supernumerary Reserve Fund, an amount equal to the current church and members contributions for every year in which no pension contribution was made on their behalf, subject to the availability of funds.

29. CONNEXIONAL BOUNDARIES CHANGES REQUIREMENT FOR FURTHER FUNDING TOWARDS THE STRUCTURERS WORK

Conference directs the Finance Unit to allocate funds for 2020 (Ref Resolution 2.38 Yearbook 2019) from the Church Reserve Fund, to fund the Structures work and also partly assist with the establishment of new Synods.

30. PROPERTY OFFICE

The MCSA has a large property portfolio, most of which is used for the mission and ministry of the Church, such as church buildings and manses. However, there is also property which offers opportunities for the generation of income for the mission and ministry of the church, either through the sale of unusable property, the development of property, or the purchase of property for the purpose of income generation. Having considered models of church property management in other African countries:

The Conference of the MCSA resolves that the church seek resources for the already existing "Methodist Property Company" to create a vehicle to utilise resources, land and property to generate income for mission and ministry at Society/Circuit, Synod and Connexional level. The required resources to create the vehicle will not place any additional burden on the church, as possible sources of finance, such as Queenswood Trust, have been identified. This work is to be coordinated at a Connexional level in cooperation with Societies/Circuits and Synods to generate income from such properties, either through the purchase or sale of properties or the development of existing properties in partnerships, or joint ventures with developers.

31. FURLOUGH

Conference considers the issue of the MCO retaining monies for Ministers Furlough for payment at a future date and refers it to the Finance Unit to investigate the registration status of the Finance Unit, in relation to the PBO status for feedback to the 2020 Conference.

32. EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF MINISTRY

Conference affirms the work and report of the Finance Unit in pursuing missional ways of assessment. Conference resolves that the MCSA is to station agency as per the need for such agency instead of the current approach which is largely informed by affordability. Conference furthermore affirms the Mission Resource Fund for agency stationing, and directs all Synods to consider the application of this fund. In consideration of applications, all resources within a Circuit will be taken into consideration.

33. CHILDCARE AT SYNOD GATHERINGS

Acknowledging that many delegates to Synod gatherings often have to seek child-care support for children in their care while they attend these moments of Christian Conferencing, Conference encourages Synods to provide Childcare options (which comply with our childcare and safety standards) and family and child-centred programming be seriously considered and built into the planning of all Synods in the Connexion from 2020 onwards.

Conference notes the standards regarding child safety and encourages hosts to request who will be bringing children to the gathering in the registration form.

34. YOUTH AND CHILDREN CENTERED CHURCH

Considering how we respond to and envision a youth centred church, how we reconfigure and reimagine the new possibilities, Conference notes the need to write inclusive liturgies, relevant to the spiritual holistic development of young people and children.

Furthermore, acknowledging the work done by Conference 2017, on the Resolution 2.3 of the 2018 Year Book titled Strategy For Youth where conference directs DEWCOM in consultation with Youth Unit to develop liturgies that are conducive and relevant to all ages.

Conference resolved to enhance youth and children ministry, EMMU to develop a module that speaks to youth and children ministry with the sole purpose to capacitate prospective ministers about Youth and Children's Ministries. This module is to be compulsory in the academic formation of our Ministers.

Conference affirms the work and progress on this issue by SMMS and EMMU. Liturgies to be available by January 2020.

35. TREATMENT OF MINISTERS

The use of force and violence as a means of resolving differences in the context of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa is condemned. The available conflict resolution mechanisms, as outlined in the Methodist Book of Order; Laws and Discipline of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa Twelfth Edition Revised – 2016, be utilised.

36. RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Conference recognises the Women's Fellowship as an official Organisation of the MCSA and refers this resolution to the Revision Committee to further facilitate a process with the Women's Fellowship to align their operations with the Church rules, processes and procedures. The Women's Fellowship Constitution to be presented to Conference 2020.

37. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARCHIVE OF PAPERS, ARTICLES AND DISSERTATIONS WRITTEN BY METHODIST MINISTERS

Conference recognises the valuable research and writings being done by Methodist Ministers. In order for the church to benefit from this research, Conference resolved to:

- Establish a dedicated page on the MCSA website for archival of research papers and dissertations.
- Request the Communications Unit to publish in the New Dimension the titles and internet location of new research papers and dissertations.
- Noting that the SMMS has established the Simon Gqubule Archive Centre, the Communications Unit is directed to work with SMMS on this initiative.

38. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Conference notes the skill and exposure shortage amongst the members of the church in the Lesotho area. Conference encourages the introduction of exchange programmes with other countries, to afford members of the church a chance to go out and learn, to acquire skills that can be useful to the church. Conference refers the matter to the Mission Unit for implementation.

39. PRIVATE STUDENTS FROM SETH MOKITIMI METHODIST SEMINARY

Conference resolves that when Private Students candidate from Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary, they shall be required to include a Formation Certificate or Report from the Seminary with their documentation, which shall be considered by the Synod Screening Committee.

40. CANDIDATES' SCREENING

Conference resolves that Psychological Profiling consisting of Personality and Emotional Intelligence tests shall form part of the selection process of the Candidates for the Ordained Ministries. The tests shall be done by those who have passed the Candidates' written examination, before the Readiness Screening. They shall be conducted by the EMMU appointed Clinical Psychologists who shall give reports to the Synod Screening Committees.

41. SYNERGISING THE ORDERS

Conference endorses the work done by the Committee:

In response to various Conference Resolutions of 2016 and 2017 regarding the Orders of Deacons and Evangelism, Conference has agreed to bring the leadership of the two Orders together, in cooperation with the Church Leadership and to consider these Orders including their history, their purpose and their function, and how they relate to one another and to the structures of the Church.

We recognise that the Orders all have origins that relate to the history of this sub-continent, and that it is important to recognise these beginnings, as we understand the nature of the Orders. Issues that the Synergising Committee is untangling include questions of theology, justice, history, mission, recognition, structures and relationship.

The work of the Orders is critical to our Mission, and central to the implementation of igniting Missional Communities in parts of the Connexion where we have long not had ministry.

The committee brings the following report, acknowledging that there is more work to be done once Conference has expressed its mind on progress to date.

The Committee proposes to Conference a new structure, possibly named the Order of Ministry and Service with one Warden (ministerial). The Order is to embrace and oversee the Deacons, the Evangelists and Bible Women, and when the church is ready for the next step, the Lay Pastors. (Currently we have about 26 active Deacons, 110 Bible Women, 115 Evangelists and 100 Lay Pastors or Youth Pastors)

This Order is to be described in one chapter of the Laws and Discipline (drawn from the current Chapter 13 and 14) supported by a Connexional Committee, which should meet annually, the membership of which should be: Presiding Bishop (Ex-officio), General Secretary (General Secretary), Warden, 2 Deacons, 2 Bible Women or Evangelists, 2 Lay Pastors, 2 Ordained Ministers, Director of HR, an EMMU representative, Mission Unit Director.

The Order will have one identity (but retain the current uniforms), one budget and one chapter in the Laws and Discipline.

The Order may have 3 sub-committees (or more if the work expands), one for Bible Women and Evangelists, one for Deacons and one for Lay Pastors, each including 2 members of the other sub-committees.

Each Ministry within the Order should have its annual Convocation, whether Connexional or Synodal, but the Connexional Committee is encouraged to consider having a Convocation or gathering for the full Order in each Synod, at least once in three years.

Candidature:

The screening committee of Bible Women and Evangelists as well as Deacons must include a Connexional presence. Testimony as to Call to the Order and vote to be done at Synod.

Training:

All training done by and directed by EMMU

HR issues:

Issues such as Candidature age, retirement age, medical assistance, stipends, ensuring that all are registered with MCO on a Pension Fund are to be dealt with by the Connexional Committee, ensuring equity and justice.

Commissioning/Ordination:

Bible Women and Evangelists to be Commissioned at a Synod event, Deacons Ordained at their Convocation, Lay Pastors when we are ready to bring them under this umbrella, Commissioned at Circuit level.

Conference approves the proposal of the single Order and its Connexional Committee, in order that it may begin its work after Conference 2019, for further consideration of its developments at Conference 2020.

42. PART TIME CATEGORY ORDER OF EVANGELISM

Conference notes with concern an economic decline and prevalent poverty which negatively impact mission and financial viability of Circuits, especially those in rural areas. Conference agrees to the resuscitating of the part time category or equivalent.

Conference directs EMMU to resuscitate the part time category, in consultation with the Finance Unit in terms of allowances. The age limit for Full-time Candidates is 50 years, but this regulation will be relaxed for part-time Candidates.

43. BIBLE WOMEN AND EVANGELISTS WHO ARE NOT RECOGNISED

The deliberate practice of some Circuits who appoint and robe Bible Women and Evangelists without following proper procedures is a serious concern.

The Conference notes with disappointment the continuous noncompliance of some Circuits in registering Bible Women and Evangelists to MCO and also not paying the allowances as prescribed by the Conference. This situation undermines the rights and values of our ordinary servants of God. It further violates the decisions and regulations of our church.

We therefore resolve that the Conference apply serious measures against all Circuits who fail to comply. Conference resolved that those members who are robed by local arrangement, and therefore not on the database of the Order, would not qualify for any allowances including medical assistance.

Conference notes and affirms that Synods should ensure that procedures are followed. Conference refers this resolution to the Warden of the Order, and to Synods.

44. SECRETARIES OF ORDER OF EVANGELISM

Having noted that in some Synods, Secretaries of the Order of Evangelism are not members of the Synod Executive, Conference recommends that all Synods include the Synod Secretaries of the Order of Evangelism as members of the Synod Executive in order to appraise the Synod Executive of the activities of the Order and also deal with timorously concerns that may arise within the Synod.

45. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW SYNODS

Conference affirms the Conference 2018 Resolution 2.40 (b) on the establishment of New Synods effective 1 January 2021 in Aliwal North and Mpumalanga and instructs the Connexional Structures Committee to facilitate the implementation of these Synods with the affected Synods, Circuits and all Units and Organisations of the MCSA.

Conference further resolves that the following Circuits shall comprise the New Synods:

Aliwal North Synod:

301 Queenstown Circuit	513 Transgariep
302 Queenstown and Lesseyton Circuit	520 AliwalNorth Circuit
303 Moltenoand StormbergCircuit	523 Zastron Circuit
304 Lukhanji Circuit	524 Bensonvale Circuit
305 KamastoneMission Circuit	526 Blikana Circuit
318 Mount Arthur Circuit	527 Wittebergen Circuit
319 Fransbury Circuit	

Mpumalanga Synod

1015 MajubaCircuit	1108 Middleburg Circuit
1017 MasakhaneCircuit	1109 Escarpment Circuit
1019 MkhondoCircuit	1121 MbombelaCircuit
1020 MsukaligwaCircuit	1122 MhluziCircuit
1022 MpuluziCircuit (Contestation)	1123 Sabieand ShataleCircuit
1024 MahambaCircuit	1124 Lowveld Circuit
1026 Central Swaziland Circuit	1125 Nkomazi Circuit
1027 HhohhoWesley Circuit	

47. NATAL WEST, NATAL COASTAL & CLARKEBURY SYNODS BOUNDARIES

Conference receives the report and resolutions from Natal West, Natal Coastal & Clarkebury Synods & instructs the Connexional Structures Committee to facilitate the conversations between these Synods and that a final report be tabled to Conference 2020.

Conference Resolves that:

- (a) The Grahamstown and Queenstown Synods continue their conversation in respect of the Alice Region to be facilitated by an External Facilitator and that a final report thereon be tabled through the Synods to the Conference of 2020.
- (b) That Ulundi Circuit (327) be included in the conversations in respect of the Clarkebury Synod division.
- (c) The Central, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Namibia and the Northern Free State and Lesotho continue their engagement on boundary changes in respect of Kgatelopele Circuit under the direct facilitation of the Structures Committee and submit a final report to Conference 2020.

46. RESOLUTION FROM CONNEXIONAL EXECUTIVE TO CONFERENCE 2019

Affirming previous MCSA resolutions on addressing gender violence and emphasizing the MCSA Sexual Harassment Policy, CE meeting at Conference 2019 resolves to:

1. Grow the capacity of Circuit Victim Support Teams (Anti-harassment teams) by securing resources for training, and partnering with Organisations who can assist,
2. Mandate EMMU to coordinate the training for the Anti-harassment teams as stipulated in the MCSA Sexual Harassment Policy, as well as ministerial students at SMMS, Organisations and Circuit based volunteers, for completion by July 2020,
3. Have Circuits offer trained volunteers to assist at local police stations or church based Trauma Centres with:
 - Counselling
 - Support
 - Logistical assistance
 - Mediation, and
 - Victim empowerment initiative
 - Engage in restorative justice
 - Creating safe spaces for men to unburden