

Chapter 2
RESOLUTIONS OF THE 2021 CONFERENCE

1. SACRAMENTAL LIFE IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Conference affirms with appreciation the submission by DEWCOM on the procedure for the administration of the sacrament of Holy Communion in a time of pandemic. Conference further notes the responses of the Synods and resolves that the dispensation to deviate from our existing regulations *should be* a time and context bound dispensation regulated *through the Office of the Presiding Bishop* in consultation with Synod Bishops and Ecumenical partners. In the light of this dispensation Conference directs DEWCOM to review the current Holy Communion liturgies and create liturgies and litanies suitable for use in a time of pandemic.

2. AMENDMENT OF THE USE OF THE TERM "SYNOD"

In order to clarify the distinction between the Annual Gathering of the Synod and the Geographical, Jurisdictional and Missional areas Conference resolves to rescind Resolution 2.34 of the 2019 Conference and therefore to **revert to the** use of the term "**District**" as the description of the geographical jurisdictional and missional areas of the MCSA. This includes rescinding the decision on Laws and Discipline amendments and direct the Revisions Committee to ensure that these amendments are recorded in the Book of Order and elsewhere.

3. ASSESSMENT REVIEW COMMISSION

Conference receives the work done by the 'Assessment Review Commission' and responses received from the Synods. However, Conference notes that this report does not adequately cover the Conference expectations of Assessment Re-Modelling. Conference therefore directs that a complete Assessment Review report be tabled at the ensuing Conference by the task team appointed.

4. CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Conference receives the proposals received from the Mission Unit and resolves to adopt the Crisis Management Plan as well as the Methodist Relief and Development (MRD) Fund strategy inclusive of the guidelines contained therein for use within the MCSA.

5. TENTMAKING MINISTRY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER OF PRESBYTERS IN THE MCSA

Conference receives the Study Documents on Tentmaking Ministry within the MCSA and notes the comments received from the Synods. Conference therefore resolves to refer the document and comments to the Structures Committee who in consultation with the Human Resources Unit, Finance Unit, DEWCOM, Revisions Committee and EMMU are instructed to continue refining the proposals on the possibility of this category of Ministry. Conference further directs that final proposals be brought to the ensuing Conference for consideration and possible implementation.

6. AFFIRMATION OF THE TWOFOLD PATTERN OF ORDAINED MINISTRY WITHIN THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Conference resolves to re-affirm its Doctrinal View on the “two-fold pattern of Ordained Ministry” as articulated in Appendix 3 of the 2020 DEWCOM Report.

7. HARASSMENT POLICY

Conference noting the proposed Harassment Policy as received by the 2019 Conference as well as the Comments offered in respect of the shortcomings of the Policy Document, directs the Human Resource Unit Committee to finalise the policy including consulting with expertise on such policies. Conference also noting that currently the Synod Harassment Team exists only to deal with complaints from Women Clergy requests the Human Resources Unit to consider including the possibility of bringing complaints against any minister into the policy document. Conference further instructs the HR Unit to ensure the completion of this work for referral and comment to the April 2022 Circuit Quarterly Meetings as well as The Annual Synods and Conference in 2022.

8. 4IR AND THE CHURCH

Conference, noting the appointment of a Task Team at Conference 2018, resolves that the Task Team (Resolution 2.33) engage with the Technical Task Team appointed by CE 2020; and possibly be merged as a Connexional Standing Committee; fulfilling the terms of reference of both Teams and report to Conference in 2022.

9. TERTIARY EDUCATION

Conference refers the following issues to the Children & Youth Unit and the Mission Unit

- To ensure that MethSoc is strengthened to be able to lobby stakeholders regarding issues of inequalities that have been further entrenched by the pandemic.
- the Units to investigate issues of clergy that were placed by the MCSA in these tertiary institutions.
- The unit to call for an independent consultation with the historical Methodist Mission Schools across the Connexion on education issues and the role of the MCSA.
- to ensure oversight over tertiary institutions across the Connexion.

10. EDUCATION DESK OF MISSION UNIT

Conference directs the Mission Unit to develop guidelines and clarify on the roles and responsibilities for the Education Desks in Synods.

11. SEMINARY TRAINING

Conference instructs EMMU to investigate the possibility of partnerships with local CUC Seminaries in Sovereign Countries within our Connexion to offer training for our Ministers.

12. CARE OF CREATION

Noting the challenges facing the environment across the Connexion, Conference affirms the work done by EMMU in the development of a Theology of Creation and Care of Nature in the syllabi of Sunday school and confirmation classes. Conference

therefore requests EMMU to report on this and further developments to the ensuing Conference.

13. WESLEY GUILD CONSTITUTION

Conference resolves to rescind the current Constitution of the Wesley Guild as in Chapter 5 in the MCSA Handbook on Constitutions of the Organisations and replace the said chapter with the revised proposal received from the Connexional Youth Conference and the Revisions Standing Committee. Conference further instructs the Revisions Committee to ensure its inclusion in the Constitutions Handbook

14. PROPOSED GUIDELINES OF THE YOUNG ADULT MOVEMENT

Conference receives from the Connexional Youth Conference the proposed guidelines on the formalisation of the Young Adult Movement as an entity within the MCYU and refers the guidelines to DEWCOM for comment and thereafter to the Revisions Committee for their consideration and report to the ensuing Conference.

15. SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN ONLINE

Conference notes the concern expressed by the Connexional Youth Conference on the safeguarding of Children online given the migration of Children's Ministries to virtual platforms. Conference therefore directs the Childcare Desk to offer direction and guidance on how the Safe Guarding Policy may be amended to include online and virtual ministry to children.

16. PARENTHOOD AND MINISTRY

Conference notes with concern, the impact that the absence of parents has on the lives of children and the culpability of members of our ordained orders, and refers this work to the Committee on Marriage and Family Life and HR Unit.

17. AMENDMENTS TO APPENDIX 6A OF THE BOOK OF ORDER: METHODIST CHILDREN AND YOUTH UNIT

Conference authorises the following Amendments to Appendix 6A of the Book of Order, relating to the Young Adult Movement and instructs the Revisions Committee to ensure its inclusion in the Book of Order as appropriate.:

8.10.4d the title "Groups" be amended to read: "MOVEMENT"

To add under the Divisions of Work: (h) Young Adult Movement

18. CONNEXIONAL PUBLISHING STANDING COMMITTEE

Noting that the Methodist Publishing House imprint will continue under licence, with Christian Media Print Conference resolves that a Standing Committee be appointed by Conference through the Connexional Executive for the effective control of the licenced imprint in future. This Standing Committee will have the appropriate delegated responsibilities and authority to act on behalf of the MCSA in terms of the Licensing agreement with Christian Media Publishing, and fulfil the responsibilities assigned to it in accordance to that agreement. The Publishing Committee will meet on a quarterly basis to conduct the business in accordance with the Agreement with Christian Media Publishing or as and when needed. Christian Media Publishing shall appoint 3 members to serve on the Publishing

Committee to act on its behalf, including the Account Manager who is assigned to the MCSA account. Conference further resolves that:

1. This Committee shall report directly to the Conference through the Connexional Executive.
2. The General Secretary, General Treasurer and Communications Director shall be Ex-officio Members of the Publications Standing Committee.
3. The Conference through CE to appoint four (4) members to serve on the Committee, 2 of whom should have appropriate understanding and skills in the publishing sector, including business and marketing practices whilst the other 2 members appointed should have a general understanding of communication, governance and publishing requirements of the MCSA as a whole.
4. The appointed Committee members shall serve for a period of Three Years renewable 3 times.
5. The Conference through the CE appoint a Bishop as Chairperson of the Publications Committee who shall report to Conference on the work of the Committee.

19. DIGITISATION OF SYSTEMS

Conference, noting the importance of ensuring that the church be aligned to the 4IR developments and implementation, directs that the Communications Unit together with Human Resources Unit be tasked with:

- Conducting a review of its digital systems and databases with a view to improving online accessibility to centrally held data (e.g.: property records, stationing information, the current version of the Methodist Book of Order, current MCSA policy documents, etc.). Such online access would need to be appropriately secured and in accordance with the provisions of the POPI Act (SA) and other relevant acts in the other Sovereign Countries within the MCSA Connexion.
- Developing and distributing training resources to each Synod so that Circuit staff and members can be empowered to make effective use of these resources.
- Drawing where possible on the expertise of skilled lay and clergy persons within the MCSA, as a cost saving measure to give effect to the above.

20. WRITING OFF DEBTS ACCUMULATED IN 2020

Noting the effects of the COVID pandemic and its impact on the economy Conference, directs the Finance Unit to investigate the full implications, that it may have had on Societies and Circuits and its ability to meet its expenditure. This report is to be submitted to the Finance Unit Executive in November 2021 on the possible proposal of writing off of debts incurred by Circuits to Methodist Connexional Office as well considering an implementation of Debt Relief. A report must be tabled at the Finance Unit Executive Committee meeting of November 2021 for the consideration of possible implementation of debt relief to Circuits.

21. REDUCTION OF AGENCY BY CIRCUITS

Conference noting that the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 has revealed the shortcomings of our Connexional financial model in relation to our missional priorities

and its subsequent leading to the equal vulnerability of Circuits and ministers, directs the General Treasurer under the direction of the Finance Unit Executive Committee to conduct research covering but not limited to Context, Connexionality, Ministry, Resourcing and Mission; and report findings to the July and November Finance Unit Executive Committee Meetings. Conference recommends that some of the research can be outsourced, to Universities and other research entities.

The research may include factors such as:

- Economics
- Demographics
- Future mission possibilities
- Analysis of trends
- Redirection of monies
- Transformation
- Changes in agency needs.
- Cost of minister vs ministry
- Review of the cost of lay support.
- Cost of maintaining the structures of the MCSA
- Budgeting.

22. REGISTRATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

Conference noting the legislative requirement of the Republic of Botswana that every church operating within its boundaries be registered with the state, requiring inter alia that a lay person be recorded as the Head of the Church, resolves that whilst this is in conflict with the MCSA constitutional requirements, to suspend exclusively in Botswana the definition of the Head of the Church for the singular purpose of compliance to the Republic of Botswana regulations. Although this not our regular practice, we are obliged to abide by the law of the Country. Conference thus supports the registration process and further instructs the Revisions Committee to seeking legal advice and provide direction as required for the Registration, and the related documents to ensure that they are aligned and ensure compliance.

23. LACK OF ACCOMMODATION FOR TERTIARY STUDENTS

Conference noting the stress that Tertiary students endure annually in order to secure decent accommodation in towns and cities away from their homes in pursuit of higher education and how over time this strain has resulted in many social ills, abuse and exploitation of these students.

Conference therefore mandates the MCSA Property Company to undertake a feasibility study into student accommodation projects in areas around institutions of higher learning throughout the Connexion and report to the Connexional Trust Property Committee on its finding by June 2022.

24. AUDIT COMMITTEE CHARTER

Conference adopts the following Audit Committee Charter as proposed by the Finance Unit Executive and instructs the Revisions Committee to ensure its inclusion in the necessary Policy Documents in respect of the Finance Unit.

25. KAVANGO OIL DRILLING and GAS EXPLORATION

Conference noting the presence of a Canadian Company drilling for oil in the ecologically sensitive areas of Namibia & Botswana and its consequential impact on the environment resolves that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa through the Mission Unit act proactively in monitoring, investigating, observing environmental impact of, and potential violent conflict in the Connexion.

26. MIDDLE-EAST CONFLICT

Conference noting with concern the continued instability in the Middle East, reaffirms its position on the continued illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel and therefore:

1. Requests the Office of the Presiding Bishop to oversee that all member countries in the Connexion align themselves with the stance of the WMC and WCC.
2. Requests the Presiding Bishop's office to appeal to governments within our Connexion to economically sanction the Israeli government.
3. Instructs the MCSA Delegation to Palestine in 2019 to submit a report on that Pilgrimage to the Mission Unit for onward transmission to all Synods for discussion.

27. MUSIC ASSOCIATION AMENDMENTS TO THE BOOK OF ORDER

Conference notes the following amendments proposed by the Music Association in respect of the inclusion of its leadership in the various structures of the MCSA; and refers these proposals to the Revisions Committee for consideration and possible amendments.

- 6.4.14 (Annual Synod Gathering) to include the Synod Music Association President.
- 7.8.11 to include Circuit Music Association Representatives in Circuit Quarterly Meetings where they are members.

28. POPI Act (In South Africa)

Conference receives and adopts the Protection of Personal Information Policy proposed by the Human Resources Unit on the implementation of the Popi Act in South Africa and refers it to the Revisions Committee for inclusion in the MCSA Policy Documents. Conference further instructs all structures of the Church to ensure compliance in respect of the policy. In addition, Conference instructs the Revision Committee to investigate the consequences of the implementation in Sovereign States which constitute the MCSA Connexion.

29. THE ROLE OF VICE-CHAIR IN THE MCSA

Conference receives the Discussion Document presented by the Structures Committee on the Role and Function of the Synod Vice Chair in the MCSA and refers the document to Circuit Quarterly Meetings and Synods for, discussion comments and recommendations to the ensuing Conference.

The regulations of the Church (MCSA) in the Book of Order-Laws and Discipline paragraph 6.12 to 6.16 gives mandate to Synods to elect the Vice-Chair who
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shall act at all times subject to the discretion of the Bishop.

Conference of 2019 resolved to adopt the renaming of the Office of the Vice-Chair to Vice-Chairperson in the interim (Resolution 17 on page 98 of 2020 Yearbook): Conference adopts the amendment from Chairman to Chairperson in the interim whilst Conference refers the "function" to Structures Committee for review.

Conference of 2019 by using the concept "interim" means it resolved for now to keep the Office. It implies that there may be changes regarding this office in the future.

This anticipation and contemplation of change is probably evidenced by Conference 2019 further referring Resolution 17 to the Structures Committee for review.

PURPOSE:

- To review the function of the Vice-Chairperson on behalf of the Structures Committee.
- To submit a report to the Structures Committee regarding the outcome of the review process.

Browsing on concepts that are direct and the implied ones in Resolution 17

- The concept "interim" means the intervening time. It means as life goes by, there can be changes taking place.
- The concept "review" means a formal assessment of something with the intention of instituting change if necessary.
- The concept "Function" means an activity that is natural to or the purpose of a person or thing.

HISTORICAL ROLE/FUNCTION OF THE VICE CHAIRPERSON AS PER LAWS AND DISCIPLINE 1992: Pg. 82-83: Chapter 6 Eighth Edition:

THE VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE DISTRICT:

- 6.34: The Vice Chairperson is elected by Conference. The Synod shall nominate to Conference a Minister for election but Conference may add other nominations. The Synod nominee shall be selected by ballot vote without previous nomination and by a clear majority of the votes cast. Only a minister in full-time work in a Circuit may be nominated or elected.
- 6.35: The Bishop, in consultation with the Vice-Chairperson, may delegate to the Vice-Chairperson any responsibilities. The Vice-chairperson shall act at all times subject to the Bishop's direction.
- 6.36: Should the Bishop die, become incapable of doing the work of a Bishop, or be impeached, or be absent for a prolonged period, the duties shall pro tempore devolve upon the Vice-Chairperson. The Presiding Bishop shall either convene the Member (Ministerial or Lay) of the previous Synod or write to all of those eligible to vote to obtain their votes for a new Bishop. The person who obtains a majority of the votes cast shall then be appointed Bishop until the next Conference
- 6.37: The Vice-Chairperson is the ex officio member of all District Committees and, in the absence of the Bishop, shall preside over the meetings.
- 6.38: The Vice-Chairperson shall hold office for a term of 3 years from the 1st

January and may be reappointed.

THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON BOOK OF ORDER - LAWS AND DISCIPLINE 1997: Pg. 88-89)
Ninth Edition:

- 6.24: The Vice-Chairperson is elected by the Synod and immediately prior to taking office. The Synod shall vote by ballot without previous nomination but only for a minister in the full-time employ of a Circuit in the District. The person elected shall have an absolute majority of the votes cast.
- 6.25: The Vice-Chairperson shall act at all times subject to the direction of the Bishop.
- 6.26: Should the Bishop die, become incapable of the work of a Bishop, be impeached, or be absent for a prolonged period, the duties shall devolve upon the Vice-Chairperson until the end of the conditioned mentioned, or until the successor elected by the next Synod assumes office, as the case may be.
- 6.27: The Vice-Chairperson is ex-officio a member of all District Committees.
- 6.28: The Vice-chairperson shall hold office for a term of 3 years from the 1st January and may be reappointed.

The Twelfth Edition does not differ from that of the Nine Edition mentioned above

SOME OF THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON:

The common responsibilities assigned to the Vice-Chairperson are the following:

- Chairing meetings: Synod EMMU Committee; Synod Trust Properties; Synod Finance – also part of regular finance meetings with the Bishop and the Synod Treasurer.
- Conduct Induction Services.
- Share in leading the business and worship of annual Synod Gatherings: prepare liturgies, assist at Synod services of worship, chair some sessions of Synod business.
- Chair of Particular Synod Committees – usually the Synod Property, Synod EMMU and Synod Finance Committees.
- Chair of some Pastoral Commissions where deemed appropriate.
- Attend Ecumenical Forums and represent the Bishop on the Ecumenical network where the Head of Churches is required.
- Share in the Convention Programmes, openings, elections and Commissioning Services, sometimes with the Bishop and sometimes on behalf of the Bishop.
- Generally, assist in meetings with finding the appropriate Book of Order-Laws and Discipline reference, relevant documents, etc.
- Being present as part of the Synod Management Team at all Synod planned events/training etc. This included New Minister's orientation, Consultations with Society Stewards, Circuits Stewards, Lay Training Day, Leadership Indaba's, etc.
- Chair Circuit Stationing Meetings or CQM where the issue of stationing of superintendents is being held as per the Book of Order.
- Generally being able to talk through decisions, bounce off ideas and thoughts,

and share reports that might need deeper insight or understanding.

THE CHALLENGES:

- There is no theological rationale for an “office” of vice chair. The closest to a functional understanding of roles may be the Ephesians reference to people being called to different roles in the Body of Christ i.e. Eph 4:11-13
- With the delegation of duties what level of authority does the Vice-Chairperson have and who takes who takes responsibility for decisions made? Does this allow for the Vice-chairperson to be held accountable for any decision he/she may take on behalf of the Bishop?
- According to the MCSA structure Bishops are not an Order but are inducted into a role of Bishop. Bishops remain Presbyters but have the authority of a Bishop until their term of office ends.
- There being no theology underpinning this role/position the theological implications of this position need to be considered.
- In the Office of the Presiding Bishop there is no “Vice” role. When comparing the PBO with that of the synod, this does not reflect a clear episcopacy.
- At Circuit level there is no Vice-Superintendent and the responsibility of this office is often delegated when the Superintendent is out of the Circuit.
- There are generated challenges with how the organisations perceive and relate to the position of the Vice-Chairperson.
- The practicality of the role needs to be considered.
- The position provides the opportunity for the capacitation for the role of Bishop.
- Issues of unity, prophecy and doctrine cannot be delegated?
- If the role is maintained the delegation of duties will have to be clearly defined.
- It provides for the opportunity of capacitating women for the role of Bishop.
- Time Management can be a huge challenge, considering the fact that the role of Vice Chair is determined by the Bishop's own diary and the Synod as a whole.
- The demands of the Society/ies being served by the Vice-Chairperson and the distance to the Synod Office also had bearing.
- The magnitude of responsibilities especially when the Vice-Chairperson is also superintendent minister.
- Relationships sometimes become strained with colleagues who seem to create a “us and them” scenario and feel that they can't trust that things would be shared with the Bishop if they speak about personal things.
- Relationship with Bishop could become strained especially when needing to chair a commission or listen to a complaint that entails the office or person of the Bishop him/herself. A large measure of maturity, integrity, respect and humour needs to be developed and nurtured.
- Superintendents have more responsibilities than Bishops and are accountable to Conference.
- The issues of capabilities when delegating need to be considered.
- It can set free the concept of power located in the Vice-Chairperson if delegation of responsibilities are encouraged.

THE COMPARISON WITH OTHER MAINLINE DENOMINATIONS:

- With the Anglican system the closest equivalent is the Vicar General. This person is appointed by the Bishop and given a letter of authority stipulating certain responsibilities. They have no Vice-Bishop, vice chair and the suffrocan Bishop is not equivalent to Vice Chair.
- In the British Methodist Church there is a President and a Vice-President. The Conference is presided over by the president of conference, a presbyter. The president is supported by the vice-president, who is a layperson or deacon. The president and vice-president serve a one-year term, travelling across the Connexion—following the example of Wesley—and preaching in local churches.
- In the United Methodist Church each Bishop presides over a cabinet of District Superintendents, who are the Bishop's assistants who more directly supervise the ministry of clergy within each district within an Annual Conference. Districts are regionally based units within each Annual Conference, each of which is presided over by a District Superintendent (who must be an Elder in Full Connection with the Annual Conference in which they serve) and which has its own officers and structures that are accountable to the Bishop and the Annual Conference for the conduct of their mission and ministry.

THE RECOMMENDATION BASED ON THE FACTORS LISTED ABOVE:

The Sub-Committee recommends to the Structures Committee the following:

- That the position of Vice-Chairperson be rescinded/removed:
- It can set the church free from the concept of power located in the Vice-Chairperson if delegated responsibilities are encouraged.
- The anomaly created by the inconsistency of the MCSA leadership structure will be removed.
- The delegation of responsibilities could lead to the inclusion of Lay Leader/Laity.
- Enables the Bishop to consider the skills, abilities and gifting of people to perform certain functions.
- Would enable to Bishop to utilise the wide range of skills and capabilities provided by a pool of superintendents.

If due consideration is given to the recommendation above the Sub-Committee recommends that it be a rational process to avoid the indirect positioning of individuals and that consultation with management be encouraged.

30. STRUCTURED CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AND EXECUTIVE

Conference refers to Structures Committee the proposal of a Circuit Children's ministry Executive structure that will include: A Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, and Child Desk Officer for endorsement at the ensuing Conference.

31. BASIC INCOME GRANT

Background/Experience

For more than 20 years, civil society organisations and religious bodies in Southern Africa have been advocating for the implementation of a Universal Basic Income Guarantee – commonly referred to as a Basic Income Grant (BIG) – as a key

intervention in helping to combat the blight of high wealth inequality and the resultant poverty and unemployment produced by such a system. Recently, in both South Africa and Namibia calls for implementing a BIG have intensified, particularly as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has not only stressed economies and livelihoods but has also, tragically exposed the realities of deeply entrenched economic inequalities. In part economic inequality has been a major factor in the civil unrest that has occurred in the Kingdom of eSwatini and in South Africa, especially in the provinces of KwaZulu – Natal and Gauteng.

Extensive research and thorough economic modelling have been conducted on the effectiveness and affordability of a BIG within South Africa. The strong and growing consensus is that a BIG, properly financed and implemented, would be a cost-effective systemic tool that can begin to address the obscene economic disparity within Southern Africa and help to alleviate poverty, reduce hunger, enhance social cohesion, and alter the economy toward a more just, equitable and sustainable trajectory.

Scripture:

Jesus' ministry and mission stood (Matthew 5 – 7 and Luke 4) squarely in the long and rich covenant tradition of ancient Israel that sought to create an ecosystem of shalom which holds creation and our mutual connected human dignity at the centre while offering particular protections for those most at risk within its midst (cf. Lev 23:22; Deut 15:7-11). It is also consistent with our Methodist emphasis of holistic salvation that carries practical implication for social holiness and equitable justice. Following Christ's resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the early church gave tangible expression to the hope and promise of this way of Jesus by ordering their common life such that no-one among them was in need (Acts 4:32-35). The consistent witness of the biblical revelation is clear and unequivocal – we have a God-given responsibility to confront dehumanising inequality within society and to offer care for the most vulnerable members of our society. The extent to which we honour or ignore this obligation will ultimately shape the kind of nation we become and the common life we will share.

Tradition and Reason:

The Methodist Church in Southern Africa draws on African values like uBuntu – which upholds our mutual interconnectedness and the sacredness of our shared human dignity – and our Wesleyan heritage – which calls us to grow in Christlikeness (Christian Perfection) through the deliberately cultivated congruence of love of God and love of neighbour in the interwoven practice of piety and mercy that leads us not only to stay in love with God but also to confront social, economic and cultural injustices as we seek to do no harm and do good.

We understand that economic inequality, chronic unemployment and the cycle of generational poverty are not simply economic challenges, but are fundamentally violent dehumanising systems which are an affront to our African-ness and Wesleyan values such as: common good, transparency and accountability, solidarity, the option for the poor and protection of the vulnerable, love for the neighbour as you love the self, subsidiarity, the common destiny of goods, integrity of creation and people-centeredness. These values underpin the guiding principle

named by Jesus in the 'greatest commandment' "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...You shall love your neighbour as yourself" '(Matthew 22: 36 40). Thus beyond the compelling economic arguments for implementing a BIG, we have moral, ethical and biblical imperatives for doing so.

Concluding Rationale:

While the MCSA is not naïve in assuming that BIG would be a cure-all remedy to the economic problems of deepening wealth inequality, a shrinking economy, increasing joblessness and cyclic poverty. While we, the MCSA, understand that the implementation and funding of BIG will not be simplistic nor painless; we believe that we are called to a time such as this: to work, pray and advocate for the shaping of an economic system that prioritises the human dignity for all, that holds before us our connectedness to each other and the earth and sets us on an socio-economic trajectory that is more just, inclusive and sustainable for the future.

BIG can play a vital role in fostering a greater sense of connectedness, unity, dignity and among us. BIG is also a viable strategy that prioritises, and tangibly addresses the needs of the people our unjust systems have rendered poor and vulnerable. We, the people called Methodist need to find our full-throated voice in urgently pursuing the implementation of BIG.

In doing so, we the MCSA, will take a courageous stand against the crime of obscene wealth inequality and the violence of the poverty that our economic systems create. In doing so, we the MCSA, will be aligning our action more closely to the values of desires of God's heart. Whatever the cost of implementing BIG maybe, the cost of not doing so will be exponentially greater. Should a lasting solution not be found, millions of our people across the region will continue to gather up the crumbs under the table of an economic system that always tends to lean toward the exploitation and the exclusion of the poor.

Noting the above motivation, Conference resolves the following:

1. To call for the immediate implementation of a Universal Basic Income Guarantee – commonly referred to as a Basic Income Grant (BIG) – by the South African and Namibian governments, drawing on the expertise and best practice economic models already available within civil society. Being a universal BIG, there would be no means test as a prerequisite for receiving this grant, and no citizen or resident of the country would be excluded.
2. To call for mass engagement and advocacy amongst its Ecumenical partnerships across the Connexion especially in those Sovereign Countries currently not currently considering the BIG to mobilise, educate and urge the national conversations and interventions necessary to urgently pursue the implementation of BIG 3.
The MCSA, through the Mission Unit, shall join with other ecumenical partners and civil society organisations that are advocating for the implementation of a BIG, in order to strengthen those efforts.
4. To affirm within South Africa the resumption of the Social Relief of Distress Grant ("Covid-19 grant") and call for it to be retained, as an interim measure, until a BIG is implemented.

5. To urge all Societies, Circuits, Synods, EMMU, DEWCOM, SMMS, the Mission Unit and the Communications Unit to do all they can to educate the Methodist people on the benefits and workings of a BIG, as well as mobilising our membership to pray, work and advocate for its implementation.
6. That the following, or a similar prayer, be included in the Prayers of Intercession, or in addition to following the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, at every communion service within the MCSA: *“As we come to be freely fed and filled at this table in the house of our Lord, we pray for the hastening of that day when every table in every house within our land will be a place of sufficient nourishment, where hunger will be no more. And so we pray boldly for the implementation of a Basic Income Grant that will help to make this hope a reality.”*

32. WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP CONSTITUTION

Conference receives and adopts the Constitution of the Women's Fellowship and instructs the Revisions Committee to ensure its inclusion in the Constitutions Book of the MCSA as well as any such textual amendments in the Book of Order that need to be made for inclusion of the Women's Fellowship.