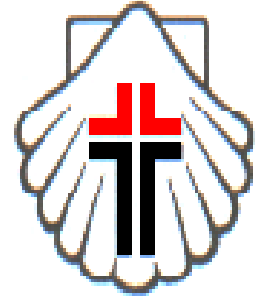




BMC

Black Methodist Consultation

[*A formation within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa*]



ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW 'JULY 2014 – JAN 2015' BMC SECRETARIAT

A. THE INTRODUCTION

Elected in Limpopo 2013 July Consultation, as an executive collective team we only had a glimpse of the mammoth task before us. We acknowledged that we do not see ourselves as worthy and or deserving to lead the BMC that has such rich heritage. In the rich history of the BMC we saw the nature and the importance of Leadership; A responsibility, not just a position; an ability to inspire and stimulate others to achieve worthwhile goals; the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organizational goals.

Memories took us back to those who walked before us and we saw giants in faith that fought courageously against the injustices of the time, driven by a quest for justice and restoration of dignity of Black People. It became evident that indeed it was and it still is God who raises leaders to be shepherds amongst his own people.

We had a full year from July 2013 to retreat and through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit seek to discern Gods plan for the BMC moving forward. We attended the July 2014 Consultation fully aware that we would be inducted into office, on a Sunday the 13th July 2014 as the Consultation drew to a close. However from Thursday the 10th July we found ourselves extremely busy 'hands on' with the administration, including finance and

minute taking, forced to consult as a collective in some of the immediate decisions that could not wait for the induction.

[I must admit it was rather interesting to observe some of reactions ranging from ‘they cannot even wait to get into office ...’; others categorically stating the induction was only Sunday ...as kind of a reminder; meanwhile a handful of the members saw the participation as handing over, in action’.]

The incoming and outgoing executives held two (2) Handing - Over Sessions. The following BMC Assets were handed over:

- **Hp ‘Hewlett – Packard’ 500 Laptop Computer with Serial Number – CND6471ZWF.** There are two entry portals in the laptop, one for **BMC SG** and the password was received; while the other portal is simply **Admin** and the password was not received for it. The said Laptop was bought in either late 2006/early 2007; it is now at least nine (9) years old, for the past six (6) years it was not in use. It has Microsoft Windows XP and Microsoft Office Tool Package 2007;
- **Hp Officejet Printer 5610 - All in One ‘Copy, Fax, Scan’** – similarly this printer has not been in use for more than six (6) years; while it has not been tested yet by technicians there are no signs of life in it;
- **Two flash drives/memory sticks** were received three days ago, not yet opened, a caution was received of viruses on the flash drives;
- **Hardcopy, 1998 Guidelines to Seth Mokitimi Award and Daphne Tashe Memorial Trophy were also received;**
- **Hardcopy Rev Zaccheus R. Mahabane Selected Speeches ‘The Good Fight’.**

Reflecting on previous BMC Programmes for the Annual July Consultations original documents that talk to the Mjali Award and Amos Gadi award seem to be missing. We

call upon any of the BMC Members who might have this valuable information to kindly share it with the BMC Connexional Secretariat Office.

B. CONDUCTED DATA BASE SOLIDIFICATION AND CLEAN-UP

This is one of the first high level activities we undertook with immediate effect during the 39th BMC Convocation held at Highveld and Swaziland and later communicated the activity in writing a month post induction. It is important to note that we were moved by the fact that at registration for the majority of Districts only name, surnames and money was accepted, with no other basic demographic data that would enable the Connexion to effectively engage and communicate with all members, yet there has been a chronic challenge of communication within the movement.

Data Base Solidification and Clean Up was designed to help the Secretariat's to reach-out *to all members*, without allowing 'The Digital Divide' to be an obstacle in ensuring effective communication. While all efforts explored that seek to close the digital gap are applauded, there must be no assumptions about access to information technology.

[Attending a BMC District General Meeting in Central District, in Diepskloof, Zone 2 Soweto one of the elders and BMC veterans while deliberating on the life of the BMC in the district, responded with a deep sincere concern and said "BMC died when computers came, we no longer receive any information from the BMC, because we have no computers, we have no emails, yet we do have post-boxes and we have physical addresses"; Majority of the people at the meeting laughed, while some commented it is his age that is talking; I was deeply troubled as I Knew that there was an element of truth to what he was saying.]

We encourage all Districts to be sensitive to issues of 'Email Access', and it must not be taken for granted that everybody can afford data buddies and or everybody is able to have

an email with ability to use it efficiently in terms of skills. Email communication cannot be the only method of communication, if we are to reach all members of the BMC.

It is general knowledge in the Information and Communication Technology circles within Southern Africa that telecommunication and information technology does not come cheap, even when compared to the developed world. Broad-band is not widely accessible to the general public. While SMART Mobile Devices are assisting in this regard, challenges remain pertaining to the cost of data; oh yes, technology is the future, however ‘current reality cannot be ignored without consequences of exclusions and isolations’

Data Base Solidification focused on three (3) areas, namely –

- Quantifying Committed Members, meaning those who gave R50 commitment fee for 2014-2015; who should receive their full rights and benefits as committed members, even if they do not have email access ... Minutes should be posted and or faxed;
- District Executive Members, meaning office bearers – include term/duration of office, such that as re-elections take place which may affect continuity on the work of the BMC, the Connexion is ALERT and implements change management processes;
- Adherents/Friends/Visitors to the BMC, this group would not receive all communique from the Connexional BMC Secretariat, only selected general information – this group could be converted to commit, once they see and know the benefits of membership

The responses of Districts to Data Base Solidification varied, at least five (5) districts responded without delay – Grahamstown; Central; KNB; Clarkebury and Natal West (addresses were not provided, only Mobile Numbers for Text Messages)

Other districts responded later and most recently Queenstown also responded. It was interesting that most districts +90% did not provide data base for visitors or friends of the BMC. There were critical gaps in the information provide in particular for physical or postal addresses for members without regular email access. This indicated that some of the anomalies in communication that were thriving at Connexional Office, similar anomalies were duplicated at District Level.

In Saul’s dramatic Damascus Conversion encounter we saw Ananias being called by name in a vision by Christ. This indicates the importance of identity; we further saw Ananias given instructions pertaining to the address where he would find Saul of Tarsus. Christ knows very well where to find his people, he knows what street they are on and what house they are in; in fact even more, and he knows how they feel – for he is raising Shepherds

How difficult can it be for us as the BMC to know who and where our members are?

C. THE BMC FOOT PRINT – NUMERIC RETURNS		
DISTRICT	2014 COMMITMENTS	2013 COMMITMENTS
Central	13	30
NFL	28	23
Natal West	19	13
Cape of Good Hope	20	0
Highveld and Swaziland	52	50
Clarkebury	18	23
KNB	0	41
Limpopo	19	41

Natal Coastal	76	77
Grahamstown	13	40
Queenstown	27	30
	285	368

There is a notable decline in commitment fees, yet the very commitment fees are insufficient in meeting costs of design and printing, let alone July Conference Packages. I challenge you to weigh in terms of costs BMC Conference Packages in particular stationery and printing, costs are more than double the R50 commitment fees, only for July; how then do we resource printing and stationery beyond conferencing?

There are many discrepancies in data quality, for instance the data provided during data solidification project reflects more numbers per district as compared to those actually committed. Which raises a question of how the district deals with members who commit for the Connexion after the Annual July Consultation?

2014 July Consultation Minutes were issued electronically early in November 2014, while due to long post office strike hard copies were distributed at the Lekgotla intended for members who do not have email access.

D. HERITAGE AND BMC WEEKEND IN CAPE OF GOODHOPE

As the Connexion we were invited by Cape of Good Hope District during the Month of September celebrating Heritage and also honouring BMC Sunday. We participated in the programme that was mainly centered on Rev Nomathamsanqa Rweqane, who was the recipient of Seth Mokitimi Award for 2014 for her community outreach ministry to the poor and downtrodden of the society at large. The event was a success and we congratulate Cape of Good Hope for hosting the event.

We do intend to visit districts to input into the life of the BMC and the MCSA at that level, however the Cape of Good Hope invitation timing indicated the need for the Connexional Executive to engage districts and possibly agree on guiding principles and further explore travelling arrangements and related logistics for district visitations.

E. ATTEMPT TO MEET OTHER MCSA ORGANISATIONS

In October 2014 during the LPA Triennial Convention following some exchange of correspondences with YMG, LPA, WM, YWM and WG an attempt was made for a formal meeting. WM and YWM responded positively, however YWM later apologized. We met with WM and agreed to reschedule a special meeting in 2015.

F. THE LEKGOTLA

Two (2) day Lekgotla was successfully held in November, to reflect on the BMC design and structure; the following key themes emerged:

- **INFLUENCING AND TRANSFORMING THE MCSA**
 - Critical involvement and participation at Decision Making Levels (from Local Church)
 - Strategic Recruitment of key decision makers - Class Leaders; Society Stewards; Circuit Stewards; Org. Leaders; etc
 - Aligning BMC to Organisations and Units that inform the agenda of Conference and have masses
 - LPA/WM/YWM/WG;X7 UNITS BOARDS
 - DEWCOM, STRUCTURES; TRUST & PROPERTIES; REVISIONS
 - DC's; ARBITRATIONS AND MEDIATIONS

- Front-end Analysis – “BMC definition/concept through debate of what transforming MCSA means”
- Timing of July BMC and its resolutions not finding way to conference [Synods; Units; Committees; Org – inform agenda of Conference]
- **GENDER EQUALITY**
 - Lack of awareness on Women’s MCSA Policy position and Gender issues in general
 - Lack of Policy Implementation
 - Underrepresentation of women (only 19/127 Women Ministers are Superintendents; 0/12 Bishops; 4/12 Lay Leaders; ...)
 - Leadership Models in Black Context (role of spouses)
 - Can the BMC advocate for gender equality?
- **CULTIVATING CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**
 - Purpose of Membership
 - Connexionalism and accountability (constants and variables that define MCSA)
 - Assess Governance Deficits - Internal and External Outlook ?
- **ORGANISATIONAL DIRECTION**
 - Interpreter of Black aspirations
 - Empowerment of Blacks to lead
 - Create moments of thinking together (liberating each other)
 - Develop Value Content as drivers
 - The depth of the dream; clearly define goals; objectives and milestones
 - Clarify BMC Vision and Workshop it
 - Publications and Newsletters

- **DEVELOP THEORETICAL HANDLES ABOUT BEING BLACK AND BLACKNESS**

- Analyze theoretical underpinnings for the BMC and the MCSA including doctrines
- Interpret theories about being Black and blackness
- Research, share, workshop and disseminate information on theories of being black

G. BMC INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

BMC's life is currently centered on February and July Annual Meetings. The above Lekgotla Outputs are challenging the BMC to have tangible programmes, however current capacity within the BMC is that of maintenance as reflected on our budget.

One of the saddest things of our times is declining active citizenry/activism that is accompanied by lack of voluntarism, increased competition for scarce resources and materialism drive.

Leading in the BMC is more of a service unlike leading in other Church Org; there are no packages ... that competition further decreases institutional capacity as majority of Methodists tend to lean towards other organisations; the truth is quantity increase can also increase revenue.

Current Conferencing Model is unsustainable as it costs hosting Districts at least three to four times more that current registration. Let's use this February Meeting as an example registration is R50, how practical is it to live and eat R50 Friday, Saturday and Sunday; let alone accommodation. We may agree it is not possible what then do we suggest?

- **TRANSPORT LOGISTICS BETWEEN TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES**

- Intended and un-intended consequences

- **WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT**

- Launched in 2010; www.methodistbmc.yolasite.com
- Dormant
- **Stages OR Levels of Website Dev**

- **Publish**

- Interact
 - Transact
 - Integrate
 - Transform

- **FACEBOOK PAGE**

A. IN MEMORIA – JULY 2014 – JAN 2015

Members that departed, Kroonstad; CPT; Limpopo/Natal Coastal; Mrs Mgojo

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the BMC Organisational Report from July 2014 to January 2015; **BE NOTED**
2. That, all the Districts needs to work hard in becoming more functional and more involved at Connexional Matters of both the BMC and the MCSA for better insights that may lead to more efficiencies and effectiveness ‘seeing the bigger picture – we are part of the connexion ; moreover we aspire to develop unity and collectivism as opposed to handful personalities

3. BMC needs to seriously consider its funding models as that relates to capacity to deliver programmes;
4. There is a need to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the running of BMC administration and affairs from District Upwards;
5. Any information on Mjali and Amos Gadi Awards would be much appreciated
6. While busy with 40 years BMC Anniversary 1975 – 2015 it is the best opportunity to collect and archive BMC Information, we call upon those who can share and or donate historic BMC information to do so.