

## Resolution on the work of God: Synod 2018

### Intro

The Central District Synod of 2018 met at the Jabavu Methodist Church from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> May. Our theme has been “Before you knew God. The year of young adults, youth and children.” And it was in the deliberations that:

#### **We gave thanks and celebrated the creativity of God...**

Who, through the worship services, revealed to us the multi-talented, multigenerational and multi-cultural nature of our district. Through the three worship groups that led us, we experienced the vibrant Spirit of God moving among us, drawing us towards each other. In different ways, God continues to reveal that our being together is not by chance but by divine design. God calls us to give thanks and to affirm each other as a gift.

We further celebrate our diversity, and the growth in representation of women and young people in the synod. Our time of electing new members of the District Management Team further captured this spirit, in how men, women and youth were elected into office. Thus showing a great sense of confidence and trust in those elected. We were intentional in electing more people from the Far West areas to serve on District Committees.

#### **We gave thanks and celebrated our heritage...**

Which through the sharing of testimonies by our Candidates in to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Ordinands Witness Services; ushered us in fresh celebration of Wesley's Aldersgate experience and reminded us of our own 'first love' experiences with God. It is with excitement that we collectively affirmed God's work in calling our brothers and sisters into the work of the harvest, at a young age, and God's continued presence in their journey of probation. We also celebrate and give thanks to the evident commitment of the district in the formation of clergy, and the role of the Education and Ministry Unit in our district. Our heritage further encourages our participation in the education of our young people for position of leadership. In this we thank God for the continued work of the Connexional Education Desk and the schools within our circuits in which we minister.

We celebrate and give thanks for our ministers superannuating at the end of 2018; their Service of Recognition was a time of the handing over the mantle, “from today's Elijah's to tomorrow's Elisha's.” A symbolic and heart-warming moment within which a great trust and confidence was expressed in the younger generation assuming the task of carrying on the legacy and the great work achieved by those who have gone before us. This signalled us to a time where space needs to be afforded to the younger generation to exercise their gifts and talents, and the need to be continuously intentional in growing the support of the young adults, youth and children of our district.

In all this, we are called to a deep sense of gratitude for the gifting within the district, the call to unity in expressing and growing our gifts and continuously working through our differences in the spirit of love and unity. We are still not yet where we ought to be, with God inviting us to a time of confession and lament.

**We Lament and Confess our impatience with each  
other and the shallowness of our roots...**

Where our differences are strong, even in the spirit of our debate, a sense of impatience with each other's thoughts and positions became evident. Our discussions over women in leadership was difficult and painful.

We lament that though we are multigenerational, we still lack in our efforts to intentionally include young adults, youth and children in the life of our local congregations. We seem to spend more time correcting rather than connecting. We further confess our neglect of the needed support in the Children's Ministry and its practitioners who are our gift from God in the formation of young disciples in the church. We confess that though we are multi-cultural, cross-cultural stationing remains a huge challenge and we lack in our effort to remedy this in our invitation processes of ministers to circuits.

We lament the state of our finances and the inequity that still exists in the life of our circuits; revealed in the financial reports. Our eyes were opened to those who still live in the margins of our country's economy among us. We further lament the continued lack of transparency with regards to the stewardship of the Northern District Trust Fund and the funds due to the district in the year 2018 from the sale of the Queenswood Trust Property.

We confess and lament our lack of listening to the voice of God through the vulnerable and weak, especially those in the mining community. When we fail to listen, our prophetic witness is greatly impaired. Our deliberations over our boundaries highlighted our lack of listening once again and we acknowledged our need to be committed to our unity as the District and to improve our support of each other in mission. It is painful to realise that our rhetoric often does not reflect in our actions.

We are a people of hope, and God continues to call us individually and collectively as the Central District.

**In our hope, we believe...**

We are called to growing the number of young people in our congregations and to making our churches centres of healing and hope for young people.

We further believe that God calls us to re-imagine ways to enhance and grow our unity and embrace each other with grace and humility. Our Bible Study reminded us, that it is in embracing each other in diversity that we see the multidimensional nature of the love of

God. God, through our Bishop's address, called us to be intentional in embracing people who are different to us, paying special attention to the young.

We believe God has awakened us to the need for rethinking our resourcing strategies. From the upgrading of the Tsietsi Mashinini Centre to finding solutions for our Albert Street School, we are called to work together to maximize our gifting in mission. Nothing in our being together happens by chance!

We believe God calls us to commit to working towards Jesus' prayer in John 17, that we may be 'One and Undivided.' Affirming that, before any of us knew God, God knew each of us and we all have a contribution to make in the Kingdom of God.

We commit to respond to God's continued work of awakening us to the plight of the vulnerable among us and our participation in social change through partnering with organisations such as the Benchmark and other stakeholders. The Land Issue needs much honest dialogue and we have the hope of continuing our discussions and increasing our church participation beyond Synod.

We are called to listen more, and to turn our listening into life-giving actions of humble service for God's creation.

*Lord Jesus, because of your love and mercy, it is never too late to be what you call us to be. May we be open to what we never expected before, never experienced before, and never thought was possible. May we live in delightful dependence on you. Amen.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> By Rev Arianne Braithwaite in the 2018 Book of Disciplines.