

“Youth Moving from the Periphery to the Epicenter of the UCCSA Mission Life”



Youth delegates and Stewards at the UCCSA 2009 Assembly

It gives me delight to write an article just before the UCCSA Assembly under the message **“In Christ there is a future-Hope in the midst of an Economic Crisis”**. The Assembly opened with a message of **Hope** such a theme which is a reminder of huge responsibility that the Christian church has in reshaping and restoring hope for betterment of our present and future generations. Such a message was indeed a wake up call for the UCCSA Church at large and especially to the youth to be the voice of the voiceless to the hurting and despairing souls of unemployed youths, those involved in drug abuse and all other young people affected by social injustices of the this world as the theme carried the desire of renewal and relevancy.

As young people our programmes have also been affected by the economic recession, the poor seems to continue to be poorer and the rich richer. As a servant of God and as one who has the responsibility of imparting the gospel to others in these circumstances, it has been very daunting experience. Young people are asking where God is in all of this. I have come to know God as a God who is within all of us as we are called to make a difference even in a world that seems depressing at times. We serve a God who is just as concerned about the state of the World and he too seeks justice, equality and liberation from oppression.

A new responsibility

Youth delegates, stewards and converged in Botswana on 19-25th of August 2009. Concurrently to the business session of the Assembly, was a brief training session for the stewards programme and some of the youth were in charge of the registration room which was the heart and soul of the Assembly. Once again the opportunity was then given to young people to be part of the Assembly committee of scrutinizers to take charge of the distribution of the documents, counting of votes and other duties assigned by the officers and in also in our youth meeting we got time to reflect once again our role in the great work of renewing our Youth Ministry and our place in the Church and in African Ecumenical Movement. This process was to result in a Southern Africa response to issues affecting young people in our region where UCCSA spans in 5 Countries. Apart from the thematic focuses, the youth reflected on their participation in the Church and Ecumenical movement in Africa especially in governance and leadership of UCCSA, For we believe that the "future of today is in the womb of the present, you destroy the youth and women you destroy the future". As young people we must start asking ourselves what responsibility we have to undertake as major players in the continental issues and the church at large. Arising from this line of reasoning as UCCSA youth we need to be the change we want to see. I believe that the leadership of all levels is the only organ that can help these youth to gain ground they need to affect the church in a positive way. Having had the opportunity to start our year with UCCSA Youth Executive it has given us time to deliberate on major issues affecting the youth and we will come up with a way forward, knowing that for any organisation to grow it will depend on its transforming leaders. It is also of great importance to note the dynamic changes that our Youth in different synods are undertaking in reviving their youth structures. As young people of the UCCSA we should not encourage to be told what to do but rather promote to be challenged, inspired, guided, and motivated – yes even at times be rebuked in spirit of meekness.

Youth Statement.

Youth representatives made the following statement to the UCCSA Assembly. The Church always says that the youth are the future of the Church, or leaders of tomorrow but we as the youth delegates of the UCCSA Assembly 2009 proclaim that we the youth, are the present of the church indeed:

- **We urge** the synods again to support the permanent body of young people [Youth Executive] which meets every first or second week of the beginning of the year. It has been 2 years since this Youth Executive was formed, and since its formation the journey has been both exciting and challenging, but by God's grace we have pulled through. It is through the achievements that we reinforce and concretise that "**in Christ there is a Future**".
- **We recognise** that many churches and communities have failed to successfully train us to take up positions of leadership in all aspects of life of the church and our communities and this has prevented many of us from becoming leaders of the future that we are proclaimed to be.
- **We are strongly recommending** that synods assume their responsibility in the development and promotion of youth leadership in this manner; encouraging and supporting youth to form part of the different committees. We are aware of many

difficulties presented by this goal but we are seeking constructive ways to make effective contributions through building of bridges between youth concerns for the work of the UCCSA.

- **We welcome** the opportunities for leadership training within UCCSA such as UCCSA Youth development programmes, Discovery programmes and its synods and hope these will continue to be extended.
- **We thank God** for having youth in the UCCSA, and we look forward to a next phase of transformation of UCCSA, a lively, energetic and active.

Indeed the UCCSA youth are moving from the periphery to the Epicentre of the UCCSA mission life.

By

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