

**The United Congregational Of Southern Africa
Denominational Youth Assembly
Moeding College, Botswana**



6-12 December 2009

YOUTH REPORT

Vision

To be a youth fellowship with love and passion that will stand firm in the teaching of Jesus Christ even in such a time as this.

Mission

UCCSA Youth in 5 Countries is called and committed in living positively and actively participating in spreading the word of God in Church and society and also proclaim that "In Christ there is a Future"

Slogan

U.G.I.V.E.H.O.P.E

In the spirit of this Youth Assembly, it is indeed an honor for me to be greeting this most impressive assemblage as a Youth Convenor and member of the UCCSA family.

Life in the past two years in the youth office has been such a liberating experience for me personally. I had never been able to challenge my self on all levels before, spiritually, socially or intellectually. I finally understood what true fellowship meant, to love unconditionally beyond race, colour, creed and borders and it was after meeting up with the youth of UCCSA who are spaced across the five countries of Southern Africa. My personal relationship with Jesus Christ had developed so much in this journey of being the UCCSA Youth Convener I'm comforted by that fact as I journey forward to the next phase. God being with me I believe each day will continue to reveal itself as a true blessing as I continue to walk with Christ. 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. 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 and 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. 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 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. "For yesterday is nothing but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision, but yesterday's dream makes every tomorrow a vision with hope". It's been a year since the UCCSA 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 we have that I reiterate and concretise that "**in Christ there is a Future**" for young people in the UCCSA. This report seeks not only to make an enquiry but also identify relevant recommendations on each of the following issues, through out my whole tenure. I must admit that in compiling this report, great obstacles had to be overcome as information had to be gathered from different methods of data collection such as observation, fact- finding, investigations and personal interaction. May I take this time to formally table the 2year period report to this Assembly. This year we are celebrating the life of the youth ministry in form of pictures to share with you the joys and sorrows of our mission stories

YOUTH MINISTRY

Jesus gave us a clear instruction as to the importance of our young people when he said, "And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receives me...Take heed that ye despise not one of these little

ones, for I say unto you, That in heaven their Angels do you always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven"[Matt 18:5,10].When his disciples would have sent the young people away, thinking that they were interrupting the important work of the Master, Christ said" Let them come...for such is the Kingdom of Heaven[Matt 19:14] .Teenagers form a precious, most important part of God's church. They are not only the "church" of the future,' but also the church of the present.

Christ created the church to be a fellowship where people share in a common purpose of him who fills everything in every way help one another grow in faith. The New Testament describes the church as "...his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way". God calls us into his body for the purpose of establishing a serving relationship with Him and supportive community with one another.

Botswana Synod – The National Youth Executive committee is doing very well as they have chosen to have separate working committee according to the needs of the synod, and these groups are having one member of the Synod Youth Executive who looks into the progress made so far and that puts them at an advantage in taking the Youth Ministry to greater heights and we would like to thank them for hosting the 1st UCCSA Youth Sports Extravaganza and the Youth Leadership Workshop earlier this year. They recently had a blessing and amazing conference where a lot of issues affecting the youth were discussed, at Maun; Bojanala Region from the 17th to the 22nd of July 2009. We would like to thank them or them as they prepare to host the first ever Denominational Youth Conference which will be combined with the second edition of the UCCSA Sports and Music Extravaganza, from the 6th to the 12th of December 2009. We have young people who represented us abroad Miss Tebogo Sekwati [UK]

Mozambique Synod- For so long we never had the opportunity to have delegates from the Mozambique Youth Synod, but this year things started brightly for us as they graced us with their presence at one of our denominational youth meeting and afterwards. The Mission Secretary and my self managed to visit them in April and met with their youth Executive in Maputo and gathered all that we could gather. The chairperson in his own words said; "We thought we had been forgotten in the UCCSA youth structures but today is a day of new beginnings as we are gathered now." Miss Judith from the Mozambique Synod; who serves at the youth office of the Mozambique Council of Churches recently represented the UCCSA Youth at the CWM Assembly in India

Namibia Synod-we managed to visit the Namibia Youth Synod in April, the same weekend when they were having their Regional Council meetings. It was a good learning experience as I was asked to lead devotions. It has been an unfortunate that due to a limited budget that we had to move the Denominational Youth Conference to Botswana as they were meant to be hosting it, but we are looking at the possible ways to host different events taking into consideration the issue of finances, suggestions are welcomed on how other organs are doing it. We also like to point out that in the 2005 CWM Assembly Held in Jamaica we were represented by Charlene Brandt.

Zimbabwe Synod-God has been forever in the Zimbabwe Youth Synod, he has seen them through the seasons and has been forever faithfully, This is one of the synod that has been faced by major challenges and a lot has been done and is still being done to help out the Zimbabwe youth, recently they have been asked to submit a project proposal that would sustain them in a long run. Apart from that they have a strong working committee and a structure more less same as the Botswana Youth of having separate committees that run day to day affairs on behalf of the Youth Synod and its going on well.Well we also acknowledge Miss Busiswe Nkomo and Mr Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda who attended a CWM TIM programme in South Africa and South India in two consecutive years.

South Africa Synod- this is one of the synods with potential and yet more can be done in some regions as their leadership has totally collapsed and they need to be revived, this can only be done when the root cause of the problem has been identified, we appreciate the efforts being done at the moment by other. It was amazing to note their 1st consultation which was held in Kimberly was greatly planned hope they will continue with the great work as they also strive to take their Youth Ministry to greater heights, Also would like to highlight the names of the Youth who went abroad representing UCCSA Youth Mr Ofentse Junkie [UK], Miss Tebogo Mohloki [USA], Charlene [India], Hendrea [Guyana]

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. It is safe to say that although the existence of this ministry has been there for a while, its prominence is still minimal in terms of its overall impact to the church. 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 gave us time to deliberate on major issues affecting the youth and well come up with 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 time be rebuked in spirit of meekness.

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

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 were 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 gave us time to deliberate on major issues affecting the youth and well come up with 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 time be rebuked in spirit of meekness

Youth Statement.

Youth representatives made the following statement to the UCCSA Assembly

The Church always say 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. Its 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

Youth Programmes

Leadership and Management Workshop 27 Feb-1st March 2009

This was part of the youth empowerment for Christian Mission programme which called for all the Synod and Regional Convenors to meet in Trinity Congregational Church in Botswana Gaborone from the weekend of the 27 February-1st of March, We realised that we have new people in all the different regions and synods who are serving in the new committees .The expected outcomes was to have a mission oriented effective leadership in our regions, effective communications strategies for the UCCSA youth and it was be a forum to share our visions as different leaders and come together to fellowship and share the joys of our different regions we are attached to. This event was an enriching one as we finally managed to get some representatives from Mozambique, and a large number of Zimbabwe youth and Botswana as always the Youth Committee and Members of the Trinity Congregational Church hosted us very well, though we had no representation from South Africa and Namibia due to financial constraints, but all did receive information. This event is meant to be held annual at the beginning of each year.

Training in Mission Programme

Training in mission is a unique CWM youth programme that is meant to equip people in training, leadership development and youth empowerment for Christian mission. Its aim is to equip young people for a lifetime of service to Christ and his church. The TIM programme is not just another youth training programme. It seeks to offer a radical alternative to the mission formation of young adults. It is done through interaction and the concept of mission and exchanging experience and ideas. It now runs 5 Months in Johannesburg and 5 Months in India. Last year we had Charlene from Eastern Cape and 2 years back in a row we were represented by Zimbabwe youth. I would like to encourage other synods to participate in youth programmes as there are life changing experiences, those who have had the opportunity to attend these programme have become church leaders, Ministers of Religion, Ecumenical leaders. This year we managed to build some relationship with the TIM 2009 as we invited them to partake and participate in June 16th Youth Celebrations in Krugersdorp, this was an eye opener for some of our young people and also a way to advertise the programme to those youth who are interested to attend the TIM programme. TIM 2007 will be having its reunion next year in Malaysia and this is a wonderful opportunity to get to know and interact with people from all over the world and share ideas on how to run youth programmes that are effective.

AACC 9TH General Assembly and Steward Programme

AACC- All Africa Conference of Churches is a fellowship of churches and institutions working together in their common witness to the Gospel. The conference opened with a message of **Hope** under the theme "**Africa Step Forth In Faith**" such a theme is a reminder of huge responsibility that the Christian church in reshaping the African Continent for betterment of our present and future generations .The theme was a theological reflection of the acclamation of Jesus "Lazarus come out come out John 11-43" when he stood face to face with the grave of Lazarus. Such a message was indeed a wake up call for the African Church and the Youth to be voice to the voiceless and also be the voice of Hope to the hurting and despairing continent as the theme carried the desire of renewal and relevancy.

Youth delegates, stewards and workshop participants converged in Maputo 7th – 12th December 2008. Concurrently to the business session of the Assembly, there was youth workshop on the theme" **Youth Responding to challenges for the Renewal of Africa**" The opportunity was then given to young people to reflect once again on their role in the great work of renewing Africa and their place in the African Ecumenical Movement. This process was to result in a continental response to issues affecting young people in Africa. Apart from the thematic focuses, the youth reflected on their participation in the ecumenical movement in Africa and especially in governance and leadership of the AACC. During the workshops, youth participation converged into regions, to identify and reflect on regional issues and concerns, the participants were also asked to nominated a focal person for their region, The focal persons to serve as a coordinating point, As an interface and provide networking and communication to various youth ecumenical movements, youth desks

from their region and in relation to AACC work and Programme. 10 Southern African Countries gathered and nominated Mr Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda as their focal person and an official member of the AACC Youth Executive Committee for the period of 5 years

Youth Consultation 21-24 August 2008

This came about after we had postponed the youth conference that was to be held in Zimbabwe, we then decided that we will have a Leadership Consultation and the change was done through a wider consultation and .The attendance was good taking into cognisance the political and economical instability that was in Zimbabwe at the time, though we missed people from Namibia and Mozambique.Rev A Arends and Mr John Joseph took us on an enriching workshop on “Tell me the old old story” on mission thinking, prayer and renewal linking it with the UCCSA Vision Plan, also on the part of the Youth Ministry as the plan guides the youth in its process of renewal. We had questions imposed on us such as what do we understand about proclamation, nurture, teaching, transformation, loving service and caring of creation? We agreed as young people that we should have a uniform way we write our reports and that they should be in line with the 5marks of Mission, as leaders we lead from the front, the people whom we are leading should not see only our backs but also our vision. Our consultation was sugar coated with an outing in Masiye Camp were people went for hiking and bungee jumping.

Great Easter in Zimbabwe

It was amazing to see young people of Zimbabwe in their numbers as this event manage to join the young people from different regions .We had the opportunity to reflect and ponder on where we are coming from and to a point to where we are going.

South Africa Synod Youth Consultation 26-28 June 2009

“Our Diversity, Our Strength “

This was the first South Africa Youth Synod Consultation which was held in Kimberly. The conference started on a high note with youth from different regions coming in numbers and the working theme for the weekend was “Our diversity....Our Strength” the programme was characterized by topics such as Consecration/Spiritual revival, Moral Regeneration, Understanding the UCCSA and Synod Structures, Majigolelo/Pledging/Fundraising and Social/Concert/Stukkende Konsert was the order of the day. As young people we had the opportunity to for an outreach at the Thuthuzela Care Centre it was such bliss. We were honored to have a number of Ministers coming to such an event for the whole weekend and for moral support and MEC of Safety and Liason, Mayor, Provincial Commissioner and the Rastas, and other denomination, as we did service on **Moral Regeneration**.

Moral Regeneration Youth Service- Kimberley

This was a collaboration of the SAPS and the UCCSA youth in Kimberly. This event was characterized by a big march and songs by the SAPS and UCCSA Youth. It started where one youth was killed in Kimberly and this was meant to send message to the community to stop these violent practices and we as young people had to take a stand and say No to violence, No to Killing, No to crime. The message was communicated in a peaceful way yet in a youthful manner associated with singing and dancing all the way. We also had a young offender who has to share his story and read the 10 Commandments to us of which at the end the bible was signed by The MEC of Safety and Liaison, UCCSA Minister, Provincial Commissioner, Youth Convenor and the UCCSA Youth Convenor which was to be given to the Young Offender. We are grateful to Revd I.J Pudule, Rev A Ntsekang, Revd Makhele, and Rev A Maseng for giving us guidance in this event and showing interest in Youth Issues.

UCCSA/UPCSA /CWM

Africa Region June 16 CelebrationS

This was the beginning of new working relationships between UCCSA, UPCSAs and Training in Mission students. The idea was to have equal representation from both sides, due to late release of funds we had a 90 people attending out of the 150 expected, apart from that the programme what characterized by such activities as dance, drama, sports, praise, worship, and discussion topics. We were also graced by the presence of the UCCSA General Secretary Revd Dr M.P Dibeela and CWM Africa region Mission Enabler Revd C.N Dibeela, they encouraged us that we should make it a yearly event and the feeling was mutual and we are hoping that next year we will go big and invite other synods and Ex TIM participants from Africa Region as it was the initial idea when we started to plan for this event, an each year we will be having a

different theme which we see fit for the youth at that particular time. This year we thought of using the CWM theme "Living the Good News"

UCCSA Youth Empowerment for Christian Mission Fund

This is a new UCCSA youth initiative of which the funds were sourced from the CWM under the Youth in Mission Fund, The Youth in Mission programme supports minor training programmes and educational events that stimulates strengthens and extend young people's engagement in mission. A maximum grant 3000pounds was made available for such activities and the UCCSA office gave us an office space and catered for our telephone cost. The programme priorities fall within our UCCSA areas of engagement, which are 5 marks of mission: Tell, Tend teach, Transform and Treasure and it will be done under the umbrella term Re-building of the Youth Ministry and its Structures hence we will be having:

- **Leadership and Management development workshop**
- **Exchange programmes and Fellowship**
- **Courtesy Visits**
- **Youth Prayer days**
- **Ecumenical Youth Movements**

This will call for total commitment from our side as the Youth Executive. Some of the programmes are

Gathering –Ghana 2010

The Council for World Mission CWM, World Alliance Reformed Churches –WARC, World Council of Churches have joined hands to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Abolition of Slave Trade convened for ACCRA Ghana, It is a continuation of such theme as "Abolished but not destroyed" UCCSA youth will be presented by Mr Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda who is also a co-opted member of the planning committee, along with other youth CWM member churches and the rest of the group will come from the Caribbean Islands. This will be a matter of greater co-operation between people common history and heritage yet divided across several worlds. It was scheduled for February 2009 but the date has been moved to next year.

UCCSA Youth Brochure

We have officially launching the UCCSA Youth Information brochure that tells the story of who we are and where we are going, it entails also our programme of events.

CONCLUSION

I will not be doing justice if I don't touch on HIV/AIDS. This disease has killed a lot of people that we know in person. It has taken away our future leaders and it continues to do so. Even as I speak someone is lying in bed fighting for his or her life. As Christians what are we doing about it? I call upon each and every person to reflect on this and take challenge in assisting the sick or teaching people about this disease

I would like to thank the Youth Executive Committee that I have worked with for the past year. It has been a wonderful experience to work with them; I hope the spirit will continue in the next committee. Let us impart love than Jesus Christ taught us as we uphold congregationalism as our armour.

***Humbly Submitted by
Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda
UCCSA Youth Convenor, CWM TIM Alumni Editor, AACC Southern Africa Youth Focal Person***

