

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

**UCCSA Executive Meeting
22-26 March**



YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT

VISION

A fellowship rooted in love by standing firm on the teachings of Jesus Christ as we aim to spread the Word of God in the church, local community and the world, even in such a time as this.

MISSION

The UCCSA Youth in 5 countries is called and committed to living, positively and actively participating in spreading the Word of God in Church and society and proclaim that
“In Christ there is a Future”

SLOGAN

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

THEME

“Abiding in Love to live in Unity”

No one can dispute that it is a time of enormous change, for instance, what happened in Haiti and also a time whereby young people are worried about climate change and how it will affect the world they grow up in, they will have to live with the consequences if people fail to take action. Many countries are already experiencing the impact of climate change. It is imperative to engage the next generation of decision makers – youth activists – in addressing climate change and responding to young people’s call for greater participation in decision making arenas and practical action. Young people are large untapped resources for global consensus making action.

Who is really in control? When you look at the world today, are you filled with despair or with hope and optimism? One big question people are asking at the moment is who is in control? Is the government in control? Are we in control? Or do we truly say God is in control? What do we see? Are we any different from the world? We cannot sing the same song as the people from the world because if we who have Christ cannot see and proclaim hope, then who will? Our hope has to be in God hence the UCCSA theme ***“In Christ there is a future-hope in the midst of an economic crisis”*** is very relevant as it speaks to the young and old and as young people we are called to be fellowship rooted in love standing firm in the teaching of Jesus Christ whom we say there is a future as we aim to spread the Word of God in the Church and society. We are living in exciting times; this is the time for us as followers of Christ to demonstrate the love of God to a world that is looking for answers. Some people might be despondent because of the economic and political circumstances for our world. The economic downturns, impacts families both in and outside the church, but I believe as Christians we can simply never become a product of our environment. We are defined and sustained by the giver of all life and good thing –God

“Abiding In love to live in unity”

This is a new direction for the UCCSA is youth taking to meet the needs of fast changing and hurting world, our Youth Ministry must change too, after a full review of the 2006 youth consultation declarations, there was a need to reset our vision, values, essential purpose and areas of focus for our work and create strategies and themes through which would give expression to our mission hence we are able to re evaluate youth programmes regularly. This is the theme that we would be using this year, hence after the youth conference it was agreed that we re-look at the Youth Executive structure and hence this is the new structure.

The New Youth Executive Structure

UCCSA Youth Convenor
UCCSA Youth Convenor Elect
UCCSA Youth Secretary
UCCSA Youth Treasurer
UCCSA Youth chairperson of finance

Executive committee members

5 Synod Youth Convenors

Committee Members [Additional]

Regional Youth Convenors

Youth Convenor Elect Concept and the New Youth Executive Structure

One of the greatest challenges facing leaders is to replace themselves, training others to become leaders. Someone has started many outstanding accomplishments with great ability whose life or career ended before the vision became reality. The fulfilment of that dream then became the responsibility of that person successor. One of the best of our leadership is our willingness and ability to train another for our position. Moses made an excellent decision when he chose Joshua as his assistant, that choice was later confirmed by God himself when he instructed Moses to commission Joshua as his successor [Numbers 27-15-23]. Joshua had played a key role in the exodus of Egypt. As young people we believe effective leadership is often the product of good preparation and encouragement.

“See the need and arise” well we thought of extending the youth executive with the regional youth convenors as we are trying to build and bridge the communication gap, the structure was adopted at our Youth Conference and we believe this will help out in the communication challenges that we were facing and also help to strengthen the fellowship across the regions and synods, Hence would like to congratulate the new MEC and also thank the outgoing secretary Mr Lungisani Kimba Ncube for his enormous contributions to the youth ministry, may God continue to bless and guide him wherever he goes.

The journey so far...’Brink of something new’

Many a times in our life’s journey one comes to a point of giving up and after having some quiet time of reflection one then continue to journey forward with more renewed strength as courage. This being my 3RD year in office it has been journey of discovery of one true strength and weakness. It is not an easy road as lot of sacrifices are made through hectic travelling and intense planning of programmes and events. The harsh reality is that many churches are not responding to children and youth in a positive and enduring way as from the young people the, lack of commitment, unemployment, lack of fellowship between youth in different synods and above all spiritual maturity. I believe God will forever in my life and he will see me through the seasons as I continue to serve God with all that I am.

- **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's been 3 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.

Status of Synods

Well all the synods are operational and have programmes and conference that runs through the year, but the lack of fellowship amongst different synods is a matter of concern,

South Africa Synod-we render our condolences to the family and friends, brothers and sisters of the youth member we recently lost, from Algoa, Northwest, Kei, and Freestate. In their report one could pick up that

- The issue of culture and barrier is a burning issue that needs to be addressed. It boils down to structural racism, but there are committed in building a ministry under our diversity is our strength".
- Lack of reporting back by the regional youth to the SA Synod youth convenor, makes it difficult to rate participation and success.
- In a process of electing a new convenor at the SA Synod conference in June
- In all regions youth fellowship/organisations are active at local levels, most of these groups are hard at work in the mission field.
- Unity: it is a grave concern that we as a united church are actually divided. Amongst the youth we have to deal with racial and cultural divisions. There is a huge gorge between blacks and black people of mixed descent, not even speaking of our white brothers and sisters. The tragedy is that we seem so content on our little islands that is of no bother or concern to us. This is not a problem that originated within the youth, but it is a problem that should be solved from within the youth. We have the power to bring about change, hence less talk-more action.

Botswana Synod-they held their AGM in Mahalapye 29-31st and they have same programme running every year such as conference and AGM and regional conference, though distance is a challenge for some other regions, They have land of which they need to develop into a youth centre hence the process is taking longer than expected.

Zimbabwe Synod – I believe that a lot has been done in helping out the youth of Zimbabwe in terms of assisting them financial and other ways and we believe they are at least able to start their long awaited and no so easy journey of being financial viable since they are using foreign currency, programmes still continue to happen, region continue to have their camp, but lack of exposure is a major division as the youth seems to be at different levels both on social status and educational wise and also understanding and approaching the bible scripture hence they have the "so holy" and the not "so holy" grouping.

Mozambique Synod-In this synod I believe there is a need to invest in translation technology and language protocol as language is a problem, hence we have had many meeting without them being part of it due to financial constraints, language as a communication barrier and election of the new committee into leadership.

Namibia Synod-Well at the moment is working without a youth convenor as their convenor is attending the UYDP but the denominational convenor elect is coming from that synod we are, we continue to thank God for them and hope they will host the 2011 Youth Conference as I would be handing over the reigns of being the UCCSA Youth Convenor to that Synod.

JUSTICE AND TRANSFORMATION TRAINING 7-9TH 2010

As part of the visioning of the church, the UCCSA is conducting a series of Justice and Transformation workshops. The intention is for these workshops to be run at every level in the UCCSA. Hence after our youth meeting in January having head reports from the regions it was agreed that we ask the UCCSA Leadership to extend these workshop to the youth leadership then to the whole youth at the December conference as we felt that it is no longer a want but a need. The dates scheduled for the UCCSA regional youth convenors who are apart of the UCCSA Youth Executive workshop are 6-9th May 2010.

The main facilitator for these workshops is the President Elect Rev Basil Manning. He is an experienced trainer and facilitator in the area of Transformation and Institutional change. We request that the synod leadership organise and encourage your regional youth convenor to attend this very crucial workshop .The participants are to arrive on the 6th of May in the evening and they are to depart on the 9th of May at 1400hrs. Participants will also be required to stay throughout the workshop.

UCCSA Youth Conference and Sports 2010 6-12 December 2010

We had an enriching experience in Botswana 2009, the conference started a low pace as young people were confined to what they usual do in their region and some of then it was their first experience to attend a denominational event, but the excitement and expectation was high especially on the sports and the gala dinner which I believe was a major highlight of the conference. Above all we thank God for everyone who attended and the feeling was that we have it yearly and South Africa will be hosting the event this year KZN and Northwest were nominated to take up the challenge of hosting this event of the magnitude and the regions agreed that if the event is in South Africa all the 11 regions will raise 30 000 rands assisting to the hosting region. We appeal to youth members to be in their best behaviour in such conferences and always participate in activities happening not to be seen roaming around the campus.

Youth in Mission Fund 2010

In 2008 the youth had submitted a project entitled *Youth Empowerment for Christian Mission to CWM* and it was approved that was the money which sustained the youth calendar of events for 2009 and God has been so good to us as a youth ministry for its one application per church and preference will always be given to churches that have not yet applied but did submit the report on how we spent the money and then took a chance of applying for a 2nd lag under the guidance of the General Secretary. We hope this will be able to assist and sustain initiatives of the 2010 events, but this does not make us to be reluctant in finding our own funds hence we have appointed a fundraising committee for the youth that will be doing fundraising for the denomination we are praying for a successful second year of UCCSA youth work.

UCCSA Youth Experience Enlargement & Exposure

Experience enlargement encourages visits of persons or groups between synod/region providing encouragements at difficult time for a youth group or exchanging practical ideas for the development and enrichment of each youth group's life. Such visits provide a unique opportunity for interaction and learning starting with the Youth Executive being held in Durban and having the opportunity to meet different people, hence it offers opportunities for encounters to a wide section of regional youth, individuals, church leaders and ministers. Region are encouraged to submit their programme of action sooner so that there is a ample of time to prepare for such travelling and all the expenses that come with it and regions are encourage to be in partnership and invite and support each other in their regional conferences above all we are a fellowship rooted in love.

Ecumenical Youth Movement Programme

- ***Young Commonwealth Climate Change Summit
Tackling Climate Change: A Commonwealth Agenda for young people***

The young commonwealth climate change summit is a youth – led initiative which brought together 150 young people and professional from across commonwealth for sustained interaction over the weekend of 28-30th October 2009 at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough house, London.

Aim: was to raise awareness of youth and civil society organisation across the Commonwealth on climate change and mobilise them to be a voice for youth, by promoting participation and demanding positive change in the fight to halt climate change.

To further influence commonwealth policies and climate change response action plans in the run –up to CHOGM and COP15 and thereafter.

Intended outcomes: was to have a youth statement and recommendations for action, to have a strengthened commonwealth climate change youth network, supported by an interactive website, to be a voice of skilled and knowledgeable youth, promoting participation and demanding positive change, to have a taskforce of youth advocates working to ensure youth are at the table for policy-making, including within commonwealth institutions, collaborations to create ‘youth action now’ development and advocacy projects back home.

UCCSA & United Free Church of Scotland 2011 visit

While South Africa is geared up for 2010 us as the youth we are geared up for 2011 in Scotland, We plan to have to have a group of young people from UCCSA going to Scotland to work along side with a group of young people from the UF church, for 3weeks serving God In a variety of setting thought Scotland. The youth would work in a partnership as one big or several smaller teams in projects suggested and supported by UF congregation. Application forms will be sent to the regions then successful candidates will be then selected at the UCCSA September Executive after selection process and prayerful time that will be done by appointed people looking at this trips, Regional Convenors are encouraged to send the forms and identify people who will be of great resources in Scotland and also when they came back.

UNFPA- Special Youth fellowship 2010 United Nations Fund for population Activities

UNFPA will recruit 6 young people to be special youth fellowship from 1 April –31st December 2010. Special youth programme fellowship consists of an initial 4.5 months fellowship at UNFPA headquarters, Newyork. This programme is designed to give young people in developing countries opportunities to engage in policy development and programming, to help build capacity of young people and sensitize both young people and UNFPA staff on partnering to address adolescent and youth issues. During the course of the programme, fellows will attend and participate in the UNFPA and UN events meeting as appropriate.

WYSE International Leadership Programme

*World Youth Student Educational
July 25th-August 5th 2010 Lucca, Italy*

WYSE International (www.wyse-ngo.org) is for people who care about what's happening in the world and are willing to do what they can to make a positive difference. Applications are now open for WYSE's flagship International Leadership Programme that will take place again this summer, from The 25th of July to The 5th of August, at the beautiful Villa Boccella, near Lucca, Italy. The programme includes:

- The development of a learning community that challenges and inspires new thinking.
- An opportunity to explore the underlying causes of global problems, and develop a social entrepreneurial approach.
- Experiences that help identify values and guiding principles in order to gain a sense of balance, purpose and life direction.
- Tools and experiences for discovering potential through all learning modalities, including team projects, physical activities, deep discussion, and the arts.
- An opportunity to develop an international network of people who wish to collaborate and make a positive difference.
- A focus on the influence of and relationship between individuals, local NGOs and international organisations such as the United Nations.

The programme staffs consist of highly experienced trainers from diverse backgrounds who donate their time and expertise.

People who have attended WYSE in the past have found the experience extremely beneficial, and have come away with a clearer sense of who they are and where they are heading in the future.

Conclusion

I believe that as we start 2010 we will position our self for God's blessing and also stand firm in the Lord and as Isaiah encourages us to arise and shine for the light has come and the glory of the Lord shines upon us. We also remember our youth who have passed on to higher calling and pray that God comforts their family members and friends; I urge each and every one of us to serve God with all that we are

It is a blessing to be serving in this position and I long to see the days were we as UCCSA youth would be beyond cultural, language, economic differences: becoming a transnational community, were our backgrounds become irrelevant, yes it's possible

In His service

*Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda
UCCSA Youth Convenor
2007-2011*



UCCSA YOUTH CALENDER OF EVENTS JANUARY- DECEMBER 2010

"Abiding in love to live in unity"

JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH	
2	UCCSA Youth Development Programme Starts	5-7	Karoo AGM	12-13	Youth Weekend [Free state]
2-4	KZN Youth AGM	11-14	UCCSA Mission Council Meeting	22-26	UCCSA Executive Meeting [kuruman]
14-17	UCCSA Youth Executive Meeting [Durban]	12-14	Central Region Youth Conference [Klerksdorp]	26-30	North West Camp
25-28	Cape town Visit Langa & Pniel]	13-14	Free state Youth AGM	26-28	Teemane Combination Conference
29-31	Botswana Synod AGM [Mahalapye] Teemane Youth Executive	14	KEI Youth AGM		UCCSA Youth Fundraising Committee meeting Botswana
	April		MAY		JUNE
3	UCCSA Choir Festival	7-9	UCCSA Youth Executive Leadership Training [JHB]	15-21	UCCSA Youth Prayer week
16-20	Bulawayo Youth AGM	29	Ball Night [karoo]	16	Day of an African Child
	Visit to Zimbabwe			1-31st	Youth Celebrations Road Show [Teemane]
JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER	
17-22	Botswana Synod Youth Conference [Kolobeng]	6-8	Kei Youth Conference	23-26	North west AGM
	Visit to Botswana	5-10	Zimbabwe Synod Youth Conference	10-12	Free state Youth Conference
		10-13	UCCSA Mission Conference	13-17	UCCSA Executive Meeting
		27-29	KZN Youth Bible Study	24-26	Scotland trip names submission Peninsula,Algoa,Kei combined music association
OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
	Conference Planning Committee Meeting	26-28	Karoo Regional Youth	1	HIV/AIDS DAY
		26-28	Teemane AGM	6-12	UCCSA Youth Conference and Sports Extravaganza [Northwest]
					CWM Africa Region Work camp
				9-13	Makhaza Region AGM
				30-4	Zinyangeni Camp Nkayi]