

DEWCOM REPORT TO CONFERENCE 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of the Doctrine, Ethics and Doctrine Committee is to facilitate theological reflection in the MCSA on matters of doctrine, ethics and worship. The Committee comprises Methodists - Lay and Clergy, from a variety of contexts such as the local church and academia, who have a variety of theological interests, persuasions and specialisations.

The major focus of DEWCOM in the year 2023 was on *Ukuthwasa* and the African Healing Practice. Whereas the focus was mostly on understanding *Ukuthwasa*, the process provided Methodist people with the opportunity to engage deeply in the process of holy conferencing as bequeathed to the Methodist People by John Wesley as one of the means of grace.

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” [Luke 2 :52]

For DEWCOM, *Ukuthwasa* provided Methodists with another opportunity to engage in complex theological issues with a sense of Christian maturity that balances both the intellectual and emotional faculties. DEWCOM used its Covenant to build the culture of respect of one another’s integrity, celebration of diversity, consensus through theological debates based on generosity of thought than personal disagreements.

2. STATE OF THEOLOGY IN THE WORLD TODAY

DEWCOM has started with a practice where it invites eminent theologians to present on the State of Theology in the World. This seeks to track the kind of theological trends happening in the world and also afford these theologians to present on their current research project.

Rev Prof Dion Forster presented at the February meeting. He shared on a presentation on trends, approaches, and themes in contemporary Theology. The topics included: Major contemporary theologies; approaches and disciplines in theology; major global and local issues; major challenges for academic teachers, researchers and students. He encouraged DEWCOM to take seriously African scholarship by ensuring that a greater percentage of sources comes from Africa and the South in general.

He further challenged DEWCOM and by extension Methodist Theologians on the following:

- What does it mean to be authentically Christian and African or authentically African and Christian?
- DEWCOM must be intentional in engaging and citing sources written by Women and Black Africans
- Clarify for ourselves on what do we believe about God and what do we believe about the God who believes in us.

- What are the limits of the symbols, metaphors and similes we use?
- Theology must be theology. A lot of people aren't doing theology. They talk about religion, pop psychology etc. Theology is the work of sitting with God and God's people. We must spend a lot of time with the Bible.
- He challenged us to think together with ecumenical siblings from other Christian denominations.
- He asked that we should please join academic societies and write for academic journals.
- He further challenged us to center ourselves by being self-critical.

The Rev Prof Wessel Bentley presented at the June meeting and shared on his research on happiness and transcendence. The paper investigated happiness from different faith perspectives. Wish was expressed that it could have assisted to also establish the African Religions' perspective. The conversation noted the depressed state of the world and the need for the church to engage and offer a meaningful pastoral response.

3. UKUTHWASA AND THE PRACTICE OF BEING A TRADITIONAL HEALER WITHIN THE MCSA

DEWCOM responded to the Conference directive to facilitate Connexional conversation on *Ukuthwasa* by producing a general discussion [not position] paper. The goal of the discussion is to allow Methodist people to share their stories, experiences and insights on the subject for the church to:

- clarify its theological position on *Ukuthwasa*, ancestors and traditional healing practice,
- develop pastoral responses for members, families and congregations who are trying to support and
- journey with people with an ancestral calling,
- deepen our understanding of African spirituality and African cultural practices.

DEWCOM has received reports from different structures and formations of the Connexion who faithfully engaged the Conference directive. These include Circuit Quarterly Meetings, District Synods, Conventions and the students of the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary and probationers in circuits. DEWCOM has synthesised and harmonised all these inputs into a new document for further engagement. [See attached summary report].

Outstanding plans for 2023 include:

- a conversation of initiated practitioners within the MCSA to pastorally listen to their stories and experiences.
- an academic seminar of individual Methodists who want to respond to the DEWCOM Paper on Ukuthwasa
- compile and publish a resource for future study and learning.

The conversation will continue beyond conference, the learning, understanding and growing is deepening further towards the following conference. Having heard a common plea,

DEWCOM presents to conference a resolution on a pastoral response. [See attached resolution]

4. DECOLONIALITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MCSA

One of the new scholarly trends undertaken by scholars in the world has been on the concept of Decoloniality. Many sectors and institutions in the world have reflected on this and its impact on their existence.

In the quest to equip the MCSA in its commitment to proclaiming a gospel of healing and transformation” as per the mission statement, DEWCOM is planning a seminar on Decoloniality and the implications for the MCSA. DEWCOM has assembled a team of eminent Methodist scholars led by Rev Professors Smanga Kumalo and Dion Forster to present on this topic and reflect on the implications for the MCSA.

5. CLERICAL VESTMENTS

The General Secretary directed, after several concerns were raised, DEWCOM to reflect on the unhelpful tendency of many ministers wearing different vestments which belong to other denominations. DEWCOM has reworked and adopted a guide that was developed in the past. DEWCOM is presenting through a resolution, for this guide to be adopted as official MCSA policy on vestments. [See attached document titled: DEWCOM Guidelines for the use of Clerical Vestments and Formal Methodist Attire]

6. CONNEXIONAL THEOLOGY BOOK CLUB

In its quest to strengthen the culture of theological reading and reflection amongst both clergy and laity, DEWCOM is planning to establish a book club in 2024. This will focus on particular contextual thematic areas that will be allocated to different quarters. The following themes will be addressed in 2024:

Quarter 1: African Spirituality

Quarter 2: Church History

Quarter 3: Artificial Intelligence

Quarter 4: Ecology / Environmental Issues

The list of books will be communicated in time. Circuits are encouraged to support their ministers by ensuring the payment of book allowances.

7. WORLD ECONOMY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MCSA

DEWCOM has observed the challenging state of the world economy and its impact on the countries of the Connexion. This has led to an increase in poverty, disease, hunger and other social ills. DEWCOM calls on the MCSA to undertake an extensive process of holy conferencing on this and establish the pastoral implications for ordinary Methodist People. Again, it will benefit the MCSA better if different structures – circuits and mission groups

and synods can engage in this and inform the MCSA to develop an informed public witness and build communities based economic justice principles of fairness, equity and inclusion.

8. CONCLUSION

DEWCOM is committed and is exploring the practice to regularly publish work that it has done as resources for the church. This will include some of the work that has been done in the past.

9. NOMINATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2024

Rev Dr Sidwell Mokgothu (Chairperson), Rev Luvuyo Sifo (secretary), Rev Christopher Gaya (Bishop – new member) Rev Maria Mucamba (Bishop – new member), Rev Prof Wessel Bentley, Rev Dr Vusi Vilakati, Rev Dr Roger Scholtz, Rev Raymond Keet (Ecumenical Affairs Unit), Rev Ralph Afghan, Mr Peter Frow, Ms Matsela Kolisang-Tjama, Ms Olorato Bonyongo, Ms Jessie Paremore Hikwa, Rev Obusitswe Tiroyabone (SMMS Rep), New EMMU Director), Rev Nozipho Mcinaka, Rev Pierre Naude, Rev Tim Attwell, Rev Xolisani Silolo, Rev Vuyelwa Ntshinga, Rev Mantima Thekiso and Rev Jacob Mokhutso.

DEWCOM REPORT ON UKUTHWASA

1. Overview

This report provides an update, synthesis, and practical considerations on the continuing dialogue on ***Ukuthwasa and The Practice of Being a Traditional Healing Within The MCSA***. After a round of broad conversations that captured individual experiences of ministers and lay Methodists DEWCOM submitted a preliminary report and resolution to conference 2022. On receiving the report, Conference directed DEWCOM to develop a discussion document on the contextual, theological, and practical leadership and pastoral consideration on the subject. DEWCOM developed and launched the discussion document in March 2023. We are pleased that the document has evoked serious and divergent debate across districts, circuits, formations, and organisations including partnership the connexional entities such as EMMU and SMMS. Early we realised the need for guidelines on how to facilitate such an evocative discussion. DEWCOM facilitated reflective sessions with Bishops and Districts leadership to deepen the sensitivity and enable prayerful and grace-filled engagement and holy conferencing.

The intensity and complexity of the discussion covers a broad range of definitional, theological, methodological, experiential and several themes of African spiritualities, inculturation or enculturation, decoloniality and the church in Africa. The question whether initiation into and being a traditional healer is consistent with our doctrine and practice as expressed within the Methodist tradition and Laws & discipline is still unresolved. What we have come to know is that there is divergence of opinion, fear of the unknown, and the excitement that the MCSA as African church is beginning to take African spiritualities and

practices seriously. We also know that ministers, circuits, and societies still do not know how respond pastorally to members who have presented with call to becoming a traditional healer. As the following synthesis suggests, while a substantial amount of work has been achieved, we have only scratched the surface about the practice of *Ukuthwasa*.

2. Synthesis of Responses

The document received substantial feedback from its online launch and the discussions across circuits, formations, and districts. DEWCOM appreciates that EMMU and SMMS took it upon themselves to encourage student ministers to research the subject and document their findings through written assignments and online engagements. Below is a summary of the emerging themes and insights.

3. Ancestral Calling in Relation to Christian Vocation and Ministry.

While there are accepted universal and ecumenical shared foundations of Christian theology and understanding of Christian calling, vocation and ministry, the feedback highlights a tension between Methodist people who believe *Ukuthwasa* is consistent with Christian teaching and the practice of ministry and those who believe they are mutually exclusive and unrelated. On either side of the debate, Methodist people base their views on theological arguments. There is also concern that *Ukuthwasa* has not been subjected to any substantive Biblical theology underpinning. Whether evaluated or not these arguments express the deep abiding sentiments that characterise the gulf between the acceptance and rejection of the practice.

In the extreme and without scrutiny, it is prejudiced as primitive, demonic and a flirting with evil spirits and the occult. Is such a response specific to *Ukuthwasa* or a general view of African traditional cultural practices. There is a need to demystify and explore our understanding and formation for Christian ministry, especially ordained ministry in the context of *Ukuthwasa* and the practice of traditional healing. This work could benefit from insights from decolonial epistemologies, the experience of African Traditional Religions and

African theology. The MCSA also needs to begin informed ecumenical conversations on Christian calling, ordination, ministry, and ancestral calling.

4. *Ukuthwasa* and Christian Theology and Teaching

African theologians recognise the layered nature of missionary influence of Christian thought and ecclesiastical arrangement in Africa. While the feedback on the document suggests a broad acceptance of the discussion and a call for a receptivity and openness, parts of the connexion expressed disdain for the discussion, claiming that ***Ukuthwasa*** is inconsistent with their understanding 'Christian' teaching and church practice. There is a dominant view that the phenomenon of ***Ukuthwasa*** and practice of being a traditional presents a nuance that are foreign to Christian Spiritual practices because it involves a different kind of spirituality and practices. Such practices include the invoking of the spirits ancestors. Such practices may seem inconsistent with the normative expressions of Christian spirituality because it involves a different kind of spirituality that involves practices. In instances, the theological section of the Laws and Discipline was cited as a way highlighting the distinctiveness of the Christian thought and the irrelevance of the ***Ukuthwasa*** conversation. There are those who argue that it is important to hold maintain curious and critical view of both our polity and current theology precisely because our inherited teachings and practices cannot remain unquestioned.

5. The Evocative Nature of the Conversation

The ***Ukuthwasa*** conversation has evoked feelings of excitement, suspicion, anger, cynicism, and fear across many parts of the connexion. Primarily this is because the discussion document challenged deeply held personal faith and views of Christianity that are deemed inconsistent with African traditional practices such as ***Ukuthwasa***. The tension and hurt surfaced because some Methodist people do not have the theological tools to engage such a delicate matter. In some cases, little guidance, preparatory work, and pastoral sensitivity was offered by circuit ministers. It is important to highlight that some ministers precluded the discussion based on their individual opinions of the subject. In this case, there is a need for increased pastoral sensitivity for members who may suffer from discrimination, judgement and exclusion because of issues raised by the discussion for communities and societies.

6. Inclusivity, Secularisation, and Contextualisation

The debate on relevance of the conversation for a Christian denomination was also raised. In some cases, the conversation was intertwined with the perspective that ‘methodism welcomes all people.’ The nature of the Methodist ethos of salvation for all and the nature of sin and the limits of love and inclusivity were scrutinised. Two questions were raised; is the MCSA going to accept everything for relevance and being contextual? Are there limits to the MCSA understanding of grace, inclusivity, becoming secular church and contextual church? With regards to the *Ukuthwasa* conversation (and other cultural practices), there is a need to continue the discussion about contextual relevance and what the MCSA perceives to be a Christian identity and ethos. Is it a free for all?

7. Church Uniforms, Vestments, Worship, and Use of Church Space

The issue of a dress code for initiates or initiated traditional healers in church is also an evocative matter. Several responses ask the connexion to provide guidelines on this matter. A dominant view suggest that members can practice privately and not wear their regalia in church or combine their traditional healing clothing with church uniform. It is also important to note that even in the places where *Ukuthwasa* was accepted as gift from God and an acceptable expression of one’s spirituality, Methodist people seem to struggle with allowing ministers and members to express their ancestral calling during worship and within church premises including the manse. This seems like a fearful and conditional acceptance. A considerable amount of the conversation became about dress code and how Methodists want to maintain the distinctive nature of their organisational uniforms and the structure of their worship. In essence, several districts and circuits suggested that individuals should continue to make the *ukuthwasa* ad practice of traditional healing a private and discrete matter.

8. Teaching on African Spiritualities and Cultural Practice

The discussion document raised several issues about the Christian practice and African cultural practices, and these include a definition of African spirituality or spiritualities, Christian and African perspectives on healing, the relationship between mainstream theology and African culture. The challenge of delineating the current subject from the

litany of related themes is going to be an important task. While a general awareness of core concepts such as decolonisation, Africanisation, contextual theology, acculturation, enculturation, inculturation, assimilation among others will assist in theoretically locating the limits and scope of the conversation.

9. Limitations of the Discussion Documents

While the document stimulated a robust debate across the church, it was criticised for several theoretical, methodological, and practical limitations. At a **conceptual** level, the paper was criticised as a desktop quasi-academic document bridled with loosely defined or used concepts. The variance of cultural expressions in southern Africa the understanding of the concept varied across parts of the connexion also revealed in inconsistencies in the descriptive of the document. Key to this is a deeper exploration into the biblical foundations of the discussion, the theological lenses used to frame the discussion and its relation to key concepts of African spirituality, African culture, African theology, African traditional religious practice, inculturation and decolonial perspectives.

With regards to **methodological** limitations, while the paper highlights the importance of critical perspectives such as decoloniality and contextual theologies, the document is criticised for using a western Methodist theological frame. There is therefore a call to foreground African scholarship, methodologies, and academic research on **Ukuthwasa**. A compelling case was made for a critical approach that will widen and africanise the conversation. Linked to the methodological limitations is the sense that the document offers a descriptive view rather than a practical and evidence-based study. Notwithstanding this view, the primary objective of the document to begin the conversation and invite a sharing of experiences was highly appreciated.

10. Possible way forward

Three core strands of the conversation are critical for the next phase of the discussion:

10.1 Theological considerations

There is a need to further explore the theological relationship between Christian understanding of God and ancestors, Christian vocation and ancestral calling, ordained

ministry and traditional healing, the expressed theological stance of the MCSA on doctrine and theology of ministry. Each of these will require an African scholarship and an ecumenical sensibility and engagement.

10.2 Theoretical considerations

The social and medical fields in which the idea of *Ukuthwasa* is being academically engaged are quite wide and varied. It is incumbent upon the MCSA to employ a multidisciplinary approach or methodology to arrive at the most informed view of the subject. It is important to also flag the mainstream propensity towards measurable scientific concepts. This often lends to an easy classification of metaphysical aspects of reality as unscientific and primitive. If the Wesleyan quadrilateral has its limits, there is a need to advance African methodologies that can augment or replace the methodological approach used at this stage. An openness to more and varied exploration is highly recommended.

10.3 Practical Leadership and Pastoral Considerations

Several issues were raised around the need for guidelines for leaders of circuits, organisations and usages for church space and worship in relation to traditional healing and *Ukuthwasa*. Further to this there is a critical leadership and pastoral role of ministers in assisting societies and formations to continue with holy conferencing with dignity and the Christian spirit of prayer and grace. Considering this complexity, it is fair to suggest that the MCSA is not ready to make bold pronouncement on the subject.

DOCTRINE, ETHICS AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF CLERICAL VESTMENTS AND FORMAL METHODIST ATTIRE

1. What are Clerical Vestments and why do Ministers and Preachers wear them?

- *The distinctive clothes normally worn by Ministers and Preachers in the course of conducting Services of Worship.*
- *It is not the purpose of distinctive clerical and liturgical clothing to give the impression of superior status to the Minister or Preacher.* When conducting Services of Worship, presiding over the Sacraments and preaching, Ministers and Preachers do not do so as individuals. While individuality, talent and skill enhance the Minister or Preacher's proclamation of God's grace, the individuality of the Minister or Preacher is of secondary importance to the Church's proclamation of the gospel of grace.
- *Ministers and Preachers represent the Church of Christ in all places and all ages, drawing the authority of their message from the gracious call of God upon their lives, their dependence upon the leading of the Holy Spirit and their subjection to the tradition of the Apostles and the Holy Scriptures.*
- *It is the purpose of Clerical Vestments to mask the individuality of the Minister or Preacher and demonstrate that the Minister or Preacher is a servant of Jesus Christ and the whole Church in all places and ages.*
- *The Methodist tradition follows the example of John Wesley who, although he was an Anglican priest, chose the "plainness" of the Puritan pattern of clerical vestment.* Accordingly, Methodists avoid elaborate or ornate clerical vestments, neatness and plainness being consistent with Methodism's concern for the poor, a spirit of humility and the demeanour of "a servant of all."

2. Generally Acceptable Forms of Clerical Vestments

Gowns: These originate from the ancient Greco-Roman world, where the *toga* was the accepted form of dress for teachers. Preferred by the reformed tradition of the wider Church, the gown is traditionally associated with those Christian communions that regard the Ministry of the Word as the central act of worship and point of encounter between the congregation and the living and present Lord Jesus Christ.

There are two categories of gowns:

- (i) **Preaching Gowns** are often associated with the city of Geneva and the Reformer John Calvin. There are a variety of patterns of preaching gowns generally distinguished by having a closed front and closed, long sleeves. Preaching gowns are generally black.
- (ii) **Academic gowns** are associated with formal academic institutions and schools. Academic gowns signify various levels of academic qualification (e.g. Diploma, Undergraduate, Graduate, Doctorate.) Academic gowns are generally open fronted and open sleeved and are usually black with the exception of doctoral gowns which may be in various shades of red. Different academic institutions specify particular Patterns for gowns required for their academic convocations.

While the **Preaching Gown** is an acceptable vestment for all occasions of public worship, the **Academic Gown** is *most appropriately worn when the Minister or preacher is specifically signifying that s/he is acting in a teaching capacity* or the occasion has to do specifically with the teaching office of the Church, such as Sunday School Teachers' Dedication services, school occasions, the Public Recognition of Local Preachers, Public Reception into Membership of the Methodist Church (Confirmation) services and the like.

Academic Hoods: Although the Academic Hood has its origin in the monastic tradition as a monk's cowl, its use has become almost entirely secular. The Academic Hood is used to signify the tertiary qualification that the wearer has attained. It is ostentatious and bad form to wear more than one hood at a time, unless instructed to do so for the purpose of a specific academic occasion and at the express request of the academic institution holding that occasion. In the event that a Minister or Preacher is entitled to wear more than one Academic Hood, the Hood that is worn is the Hood representing the wearer's highest academic qualification. *Hoods, like Academic Gowns, are worn only when the occasion demands that the teaching office of the Minister or Preacher or the Church be signified.* The Hood is always worn in conjunction with an Academic Gown or Cassock.

Cassocks: Two types of Cassocks are common in modern Methodism:

- (i) The *Alb* which is an ankle length white linen tunic (its original name in Latin is a *Tunica Alba*, meaning "white tunic") derived from the common dress of New Testament times and associated with Jesus' seamless robe.
- (ii) The *Cassock*, usually black. The Cassock dates from the late Roman Empire (5th Century) when clergy were distinguished from laity by the fact that laity wore the Cassock as a short, knee length, garment and the clergy wore it as an ankle length garment. The Cassock may be worn with or without a *girdle*, which is a belt made of cord or leather, or a *cincture*, a broad waist band, usually of cloth the same colour as the Cassock. The cincture is sometimes tasselled.

Note: *The seams of the Alb nor the Cassock may not be decorated with piping of a colour other than that of the garment itself.* In some denominations (such as the Roman Catholic Church) piping of the seams, usually in red, signifies the office of Cardinal or some other high office. The Methodist Church does not follow this practice.

In choosing either an *Alb* or *Cassock*, Methodism's preference for plainness and simplicity of colour and design must be observed.

Stoles: A long scarf used to signify various types of ordained ministry and pastoral oversight of a Christian community. The Stole originated in the Roman Empire as a method of identifying persons performing various administrative and leadership functions (e.g. magistrates, senators, consuls). Stoles may be worn to signify the following ministries in the following ways:

- (i) *Bishops:* The Stole is worn to signify the ministry of oversight on formal ceremonial occasions when the bishop represents either the district over which the bishop has oversight or when representing the Methodist Connexion. In the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, it is customary for Bishops to wear a red stole over a white *Alb* or white *Cassock* and a white clerical (Roman) collar, with the stole hanging free in front, from both shoulders.
- (ii) *Presbyters (ordained Ministers):* The stole is worn to signify that the Presbyter (ordained minister) has been ordained to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments and has pastoral charge and oversight of a Society, Section of a Circuit or a Circuit. Where a minister in training (probationer) has pastoral charge and has dispensation to preside over the Sacraments in a particular Circuit, the stole may be worn. The stole is worn in the same manner as a Bishop, over a Gown, Alb or Cassock, over both shoulders with the ends of the stole hanging free in front. Presbyters may wear the stole on ceremonial occasions at Convocations, Conferences and Synods when presbyters are representing their pastoral charges and only at the discretion and the specific instruction of the person presiding over the occasion. The presiding person shall nominate the colour of stole to be worn.
- (iii) *Deacons:* The Deacon's stole is worn to signify that the Deacon has been ordained to the Ministry of the Word and Service and to a specific ministry within a Circuit. The Deacon's stole is worn over a Gown, Alb or Cassock. The Deacon's stole is worn over the left shoulder and fastened at the right hip.

Colours of stoles: The principal colours of stoles are: White (or Gold), Purple, Red and Green. Each colour represents both the Season in the Christian Liturgical calendar and specific events, for example weddings, funerals and commemorations. Wearers of stoles must ensure that the colour of stole worn is consistent with the Liturgical Season or occasion. See "Liturgical Colours" below.

Designs on stoles: It is acceptable to have decorations and Christian, including Methodist, symbols embroidered or sewn on stoles, provided that the principal colour of the stole is prominent.

Insignia of Lay Office Bearers: The Offices of Lay persons are signified either by a medallion on which the title of the specific office is inscribed and attached to a ribbon which is worn on the chest, suspended from the neck, or a badge or brooch on which the specific office is inscribed and affixed to the upper left chest of the wearer.

Examples of Lay Office Bearers who are entitled to wear a medallion, badge or brooch are: The Lay President of the MCSA, District Lay Leaders, General Presidents and District Presidents of Organisations.

Liturgical Colours are intended to signify specific Seasons or occasions in the Church's life. The use of liturgical colours maintains congregations' interest in and awareness of the meaning of the Seasons and occasions, highlighting the unfolding story of God's grace as it is told through the Christian calendar. Other drapes, banners and even the principal colours of flower arrangements in the church, when linked to the Seasonal colours, add interest and awareness to the routine pattern of the worshipping congregation's life. *Those who wear stoles must have a full set of stoles in the various liturgical colours and must wear the colour appropriate to the Season or occasion.*

The colours and their respective seasons and occasions are as follows:

Purple: Purple is associated with repentance or mourning and is worn during Advent and Lent and memorial and funeral services, except that White (or Gold) may be worn at memorial or funeral services at the discretion of the officiant.

White (or Gold): White (or Gold) is associated with celebration and thanksgiving and is worn at Christmas (and all Sundays until Epiphany, 6th January), Easter (and all Sundays after Easter until the Sunday before Pentecost), Ascension, Trinity Sunday (the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday), the Festival of the Reign of Christ (Christ the King Sunday) on the fifth Sunday before Christmas, which marks the end of the Liturgical Year. White (or Gold) is also worn at weddings and induction services.

Red: Red is associated with the flame signifying the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2: 3) and with the blood of martyrdom. In the Methodist Church of Southern Africa red, with black and white, are the colours of the Connexion. Red is worn on Palm Sunday and all the days of Holy Week, Pentecost Sunday and on occasions commemorating martyrdom. Red may also be worn on specifically Southern African Methodist occasions such as Ordination, Covenant Services and public Reception into Full Membership. Note that the wearing of red is not exclusive to Bishops on these occasions.

Green: Green is associated with life and growth in the natural world and as such symbolizes the ongoing life and growth of Christians and the Christian Church. The Season in which green is worn is known as "Common Time" (or "Ordinary Time") which commences on the Sunday after Epiphany (6th January) and continues until the Sunday before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. Common time and the wearing of green recommences on the Sunday after Trinity Sunday and continues until the sixth Sunday before Christmas.

Tabs or Bands: Are two white linens strips approximately 15cms long and 4cms wide attached below the clerical collar. They are remnants of the white linen or silk scarf

traditionally worn by members of the professions of divinity, law and medicine (medical doctors have ceased to wear them in modern times.) They were usually worn by John Wesley.

Tab or bands are worn to signify that the wearer is a qualified and recognised member of one of those professions. Accordingly, tabs or bands may be worn only by ordained presbyters (ministers).

DEWCOM RESOLUTIONS TO CONFERENCE 2023

1. DEWCOM RESOLUTION ON FURTHER CONVERSATION ON UKUTHWASA

Conference receives the discussion document on Ukuthwasa and the Practice of Traditional Healing in the MCSA and the DEWCOM report on the progress of this conversation. Noting that the primary objective of the discussion document was to begin an important conversation on the relationship between this important phenomenon with our theology and practice of ministry and mission. The ongoing conversations across the connexion have highlighted important themes and conversation that still need to be explored, such as a decoloniality, interdisciplinary perspectives on Ukuthwasa and healing, Christian calling and ancestral calling, worship, vestments, church uniforms and a further exploration into African scholarship and African religions.

Conference further notes that the conversation has evoked a spectrum of complex responses across connexion. These responses require intentional theological leadership and pastoral sensitivity from all our ministerial and lay agency. Conference draws the attention of all Methodists that in 2001 and 2005 respectively, we made a commitment to be 'community of love and love and acceptance' that is committed to respecting our diversity and collectively hold each other accountable in a process of holy conferencing and prayerful discernment.

Therefore,

- Conference recognises that the MCSA is not yet ready to take a formal polity or theological position on the matter and calls on DEWCOM to continue assisting the connexion in facilitating the discernment on Ukuthwasa and traditional healing.

- Conference further calls on DEWCOM to explore the possibility of compiling the cumulative work toward a publication of this important reflective work for the MCSA.
- Conference calls on all districts, circuits, and formations to ensure that every society is a place of welcome and care and to continue the discussion with dignity and respect for difference.

2. DEWCOM RESOLUTION ON THE WORLD ECONOMY AND IMPLICATIONS ON THE MCSA

DEWCOM has observed the challenging state of the world economy and its impact on poor countries including those that make up the Connexion. This has led to an increase in poverty, disease, hunger and other social ills.

DEWCOM moves that Conference calls on MCSA to undertake an extensive process of holy conferencing on this and establish the pastoral implications for ordinary Methodist People. Conference to direct the different structures – circuits and mission groups and synods to engage in this and inform the MCSA to develop an informed response leading to public witness and building of communities based on economic justice principles of fairness, equity and inclusion.