



MISSION CONGRESS 2025

A Pilgrimage of Renewal

DAILY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 01, NO.1



METHODIST.ORG.ZA



15 SEPTEMBER 2025



HIGHLIGHTS FROM PBS ADDRESS

uMandulo – Cultivating the Soil for Renewal

The Presiding Bishop, Rev Pumla Nzimande drew from the Zulu name for September, uMandulo, meaning the season of cultivation. She likened Mission Congress 2025 to tilling the soil of the MCSA, bringing to the surface deep issues, mixing new material through intergenerational and intercultural engagement, and leaving room for God's surprises.

Exile as a Theological Lens

Using Isaiah 43, she reflected on Israel's exile in Babylon as a metaphor for the Church today. The MCSA is "away from home" in a context of poor governance, loss of prayer, decline in evangelism, and low morale. Yet God still speaks in foreign lands and continues to guide the Church towards renewal.

Continued at page 4



Members of the Mission Congress during the Opening Address in Northfield Methodist Church

MISSION CONGRESS CALLS METHODISTS TO REIMAGINE WITNESS

Written by Rev Ralph Afghan,

The anticipated Mission Congress of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa began in the sacred grounds of Northfield Methodist Campus, with the vibrant sounds of marimba melodies filling the air. As delegates and observers gathered, I could sense the depth of what it meant to be in a space of discernment, together seeking to interpret the signs of the times for the life and witness of the church.

Presiding Bishop Nzimande welcomed us into this sacred moment, grounding her reflection in Isaiah 43:16–21. She reminded us that the telos, the ultimate goal, is to embody an alternative community in an ever-changing world. This Congress, she named, is a true Kairos moment, nine years since the last Mission Congress in 2016, where we lamented our missional stagnation. Now, we are summoned once again into God's renewing work.

Three profound theological movements shaped her reflection:

1. **Theological Realization** – The harvest depends on what we are now, on what the church has become in its present witness. Yet even in this reality, we must leave room for the God of the harvest to surprise us. Though we cultivate faithfully, it is God who remains sovereign over the harvest.
 2. **Theological Re-imagination** – We are called to move beyond the defiling boxes of worldliness. The Presiding Bishop posed a crucial question: how do we counter the voice of the world that echoes so loudly in the church? Her challenge was clear, the church must lift its voice even louder, embodying a prophetic witness that silences the noise of worldliness.
 3. **A New Theological Lens** – Finally, we were asked to consider what we shall deposit for the next generation. God continues to speak even in foreign lands, and throughout history God has declared to Israel: “I am doing a new thing.” In this Mission Congress, too, we are reminded that God is doing a new thing among us.
- These three movements: realization, reimagination, and new lenses; are only possible if we as the church open ourselves to new possibilities, embrace adaptation, and imitate Christ within our communities.

IN BRIEF REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST.

Written by Mbali Binda

At the Mission Congress, a discernment group on **Prophetic Witness and Social Justice** wrestled with the theme “Remembering Who We Are in Christ.” Despite a chaotic start, discussions revealed a shared call to return to the basics of discipleship and mission, reclaiming Wesleyan identity, reviving the class system, and opening church spaces to communities. As Rev. Nyobole noted, “We are over-churched and under-discipled,” highlighting the need for the church to move from self-focus to genuine discipleship.

VOICES AT MISSION CONGRESS

VOICES AT CONGRESS

MISSION CONGRESS 2025
A Pilgrimage of Renewal



“My expectation for this Mission Congress is that it will help the entire Church to pave a new way of doing mission within the Methodist Church.

There were good things that the Church has been doing, and I believe we are going to keep those good things. But it is my expectation that in this Mission Congress, we are going to come up with new ways of doing mission, especially in evangelism and other important areas of the Church's work.”

Rev Phumlani JamJam

Mission Coordinator, Natal West District

I look forward to this Mission Congress to be spiritually revived, to be a completely new person, and to go and spread the love of God, and also to go teach back at home of what we have done, and what is God's mission, all in all, throughout the Methodist Witness. I think that's about it. Hi everyone,

Mrs. Mpilo Maswabi

Northern Free State and Lesotho





MR. MALI CALLS FOR PURPOSE-LED, ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AT MISSION CONGRESS

Written by Mbali Binda

In a powerful keynote address at the Mission Congress, Mr. Mali challenged the Mission Congress to rethink what true leadership means in the church and beyond. Opening with a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail,” he set the tone for a call to purpose-driven, visionary, and servant-hearted leadership.

Mr. Mali emphasised that leadership must be rooted in purpose. “The question is not only why we want to lead, but also why we choose the leaders we do,” he said. He reminded participants that leadership is not about titles or positions, but about influence, love, and service. “If serving is beneath you, then leadership is beyond you,” he cautioned.

“A leader’s role is not to generate all the great ideas, but to create an environment where great ideas can happen,” he noted. Turning to growth and development, Mr. Mali posed a question to the Church on whether they are open to new ideas. He warned against leaders who fail to listen, as they risk surrounding themselves with people who have nothing to say. Instead, he urged leaders to be approachable, to guide without force, and to embrace lifelong learning.

On ethical leadership, Mr. Mali’s message was clear: leaders leave a mark, for good or ill. “Leaders cast a shadow over the organisations they lead,” he said, reminding the Congress that the most powerful form of leadership is to lead by example. The keynote resonated strongly with delegates, many of whom described it as a timely reminder of the church’s responsibility to cultivate leaders who serve with humility, openness, and integrity.

A GLIMPSE OF THE FAITHFUL GATHERED AT THE MISSION CONGRESS.



Do Not Cling to the Past, but Receive and Transmit

While challenging the notion of “forgetting the past,” Rev Nzimande insisted that the Church must glance at the past without clinging to it. The faith, heritage, and prophetic witness deposits received from former leaders must now be transmitted into a healthier Church for future generations.

Lessons from Former Leaders

She recounts a pilgrimage of visiting past Presidents and Presiding Bishops, drawing from their wisdom. Each deposited something valuable: justice (Mogoba), reconciliation (Scholtz), peace and renewal (Dandala), prophetic witness (Storey), social justice (Abrahams), education and ethics (Siwa), courage and breaking barriers (Malinga), among others. These deposits must inspire today’s mission.

Prophetic Imagination and New Possibilities

Echoing Walter Brueggemann, she called the Congress to embrace prophetic imagination—to see beyond the visible and reimagine the MCSA’s mission in the world. This involves amplifying spirituality, prophetic witness, inclusivity, innovation, and African identity. The Church must adapt like nature, shed what is retrogressive and boldly declare: “Behold, I am doing a new thing.”

**MISSION CONGRESS 2025 – OPENING DAY HIGHLIGHTS**

Written by Mahlatse Rapholo

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) opened Mission Congress 2025 in a spirit of prayer, anticipation, and discernment, with the Presiding Bishop declaring it a potential kairos moment. The congress is framed not as just another event but as an opportunity to listen deeply to God and discern the church’s prophetic direction.

- **Rev. K. Zono** reminded delegates that mission belongs to God, urging humility and openness.
- Brother Sinethemba Dubo challenged the church to reclaim its prophetic voice for justice, healing, and transformation.
- **Brother Ntwele** emphasized that youth participation is essential in shaping the church’s future.
- **Mrs. Mpilo Maswabi** expressed readiness to learn and pass on insights from Congress to local communities.
- Some delegates called for caution, stressing the need for deeper grassroots discernment rather than rushing the process.

The opening day set a strong foundation, highlighting themes of prophetic renewal, intergenerational collaboration, and discernment. The Congress now stands at a crossroads, seeking to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church in this critical moment of renewal and reformation.

**The Team**

Editor: Ms Bongie Moyo-Bango, **Graphic Designer:** Thobelani Ncapai, **Photographers:** Karabo Sibi, Itumeleng Moroke, Tlholohelo Maduna, **Graphics:** Siyanda Ntsalaze, **Writers:** Mbali Binda, Rev Ralph Afghan, Mahlatse Rapholo

Copyright © 2025 Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

The Mission Congress Daily Newsletter is an official publication of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, produced exclusively for Mission Congress 2025. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or recording, without prior written permission from the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. Quotations may be used with proper acknowledgment.