



The Methodist Church  
of Southern Africa

# Another Dimension

FEBRUARY 2026



## METHODIST HIGH SCHOOL SHINES IN THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO: A Celebration of Excellence and the Transformative Mission of the MCSA

In the heart of Maseru, the capital of the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, a powerful story of hope, excellence, and mission-driven education continues to unfold. The Methodist High School, long known for its discipline, academic rigour, and deep-rooted Christian ethos, has once again etched its name into national history. This year, the school proudly secured position five among the Top 10 best-performing schools in Lesotho, a testament to its sustained tradition of academic excellence. But this achievement is not merely a school victory; it is a celebration of the enduring work and vision of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) in shaping the future of young people across Lesotho.

### A Legacy Rooted in Mission

For decades, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa has understood education as one of its greatest ministries, a powerful tool for community upliftment, transformation, and empowerment. Through institutions like the Methodist High School, the Church's mission of "forming disciples and transforming communities" takes tangible shape in the lives of young Basotho. This year's achievements reflected that legacy

powerfully. A remarkable 65 pupils achieved a Bachelor's aggregate, demonstrating excellence across a range of subjects. Among these, 25 learners were honoured with special awards for outstanding performance at a celebratory ceremony held on 20 February 2026 at the school premises.

### A Celebration Marked by Community and Mission

The awards ceremony was graced by a full entourage from the Methodist family and the broader community, such as the proprietor, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (Northern Free State and Lesotho District 0600, Maseru Circuit 0650), under the leadership of Rev. S. J. Kobuoe. He was joined by the Methodist High School Board and representatives from the Methodist Schools Secretariat. Government dignitaries were also present, along with sponsors and partners who presented gifts and awards to honour the learners' achievements. Their presence was not merely ceremonial; it was a powerful reminder that the success of Methodist High School is a shared victory, rooted in partnership between the Church, educators, parents, and the wider community.

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# Another Dimension

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## A School Alive With Joy and Purpose

As the event unfolded, an atmosphere of joy, pride, and celebration filled the entire school community. Learners, parents, and educators stood united in honouring the fruits of hard work and disciplined study.

A highlight of the ceremony came when the dynamic and passionate Principal, Mr. Molupe Tjabaka, reminded the learners of the school's energising slogan:

### “Methodist is the... BEST!”

With a spirited call-and-response, the school grounds erupted in ululation, applause, and jubilant energy. It was a moment that captured the heart of the school marked by its discipline, its unity, and its unwavering belief in excellence.

## Inspiring a Future of Possibility

Moments like these do more than celebrate current success; they ignite new determination, new dreams, and new horizons. The learners were visibly inspired, motivated not only by recognition but also by the presence of Church leadership and community champions who believe deeply in their potential.



There is renewed hope that even greater achievements await the Methodist High School in the years ahead. With the continued support of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, its mission structures, leadership, and educational ministries, the school remains a beacon of light in Lesotho's educational landscape.

## The Church at Work in the World

The Methodist High School's triumph is more than an academic milestone, it is living evidence of the Church's transformative mission. Through education, the MCSA continues to build confident, capable, value-driven young people who will one day lead and uplift their communities.

In celebrating these learners, we celebrate the Kingdom of God at work through the Methodist Church, shaping young lives, strengthening families, and sowing seeds of hope for Lesotho's future.

## Indeed, Methodist is the... BEST!

And its impact continues to shine brightly across the Mountain Kingdom.



# BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE STUDENT MINISTRY: MCSA Engagement at the University of Botswana

On Friday, 13 February 2026, the Methodist Children and Youth Unit (MCYU) Director, Rev. Phezile Koekoe, the Molopo District Lay Leader, Mrs Neo Mollentze, the Molopo District MCYU Committee, Gaborone Circuit Ministers, Circuit Stewards, lay leadership, and Circuit Youth Leaders visited the University of Botswana (UB).

The delegation met with the leadership of the Department of Student Welfare, which falls under the Division of Student Affairs.

The University warmly welcomed the MCSA team and provided introductory remarks about the institution, with specific reference to the Department of Student Welfare, whose mandate is to enhance and improve the overall student experience at the University.

The Department oversees student accommodation services, the reception and orientation of new students, student leadership development, the management of residence life, and the general welfare of students at UB. Their work ensures that students have a conducive living and learning environment. All their activities are guided by the theme, "We Are Here to Grow," which emphasises continuous learning and holistic development.

The MCSA team presented the Students Campus Ministry as offered by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to university and college students. This ministry focuses on meaningful and

transformative approaches that deeply impact students' lives by creating intentional, relational spaces that support their holistic formation and development.

The programmes presented by MCSA included:

1. Discipleship Programmes  
Focused on continuous spiritual and moral formation and growth of students:
  - Regular worship services, Bible Studies, and Class Meetings
  - Leadership development programmes
  - Other contextually relevant discipleship initiatives for university students
2. Pastoral Care
  - Counselling and support for students in distress
  - Hospital visits for sick students
  - Other pastoral interventions as required
3. Mission and Advocacy
  - Engagement with students' socio-economic concerns
  - Social and public advocacy initiatives

Specific programmes highlighted included the Methodist Students Society (MethSsoc), the Ready to Help Campaign, Student Food Banks, Student Food Relief Programmes, the Tsietsi Mashinini Bursary Fund, and the Youth Economic Empowerment Fund.

The University warmly welcomed the MCSA initiative, noting its strong alignment with the strategic objectives of the Student Welfare Department.

The day concluded with a public engagement session with Methodist students registered at various universities and colleges across Gaborone. Ompolokile, from North West University, presented on MethSsoc, outlining its strategic objectives, functions, and programmes. The session was interactive, with ideas shared and exchanged openly.

It was noted that students' challenges are largely similar across different countries, although intervention strategies must be contextually developed and implemented. Methodist students in Gaborone enthusiastically embraced the concept of the Methodist Students Society, and the Circuit committed to offering support and resources to strengthen this mission and ministry among students.

The day concluded with a fellowship meal organised by the Circuit for students and visitors. In support of the Students Food Relief Programme, the Connexional MCYU handed over food hampers valued at 7,000 Pula to assist students experiencing food insecurity. The Circuit warmly welcomed this act of solidarity and compassion.

*The other side awaits.*  
To bring about change, let us show ourselves.



# “SINGABANTU BEMINI YESITHATHU”: A Tribute to Mrs Nandipha Hlongwane

The Connexion, and in particular the new Uphondo Lwendlovu District, were thrown into mourning by the sudden death of Mrs Nandi Hlongwane, the Bishop, Rev. Mzubanzi Hlongwane’s wife.

The Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, preaching at the funeral reminded the Church: “*Singabantu bomhla wesithathu*”—we are a third-day people.

“Not long ago, the Church gathered in the Phondolwendlovu District to pray with the Hlongwane family at the induction of Bishop Hlongwane. On that day, words of encouragement were spoken to Mama Hlongwane: “Thandaza ungaphezi—pray without ceasing.” The Church believed she would continue to stand as a pillar of prayer—a mother of the District, interceding for the Bishop, for the clergy, and for the people of God,” she said.

But, as the Bishop reflected, Babylon arrived.

Drawing from the prophet Hosea, the sermon acknowledged that death—like Babylon—can feel overwhelming and destructive. Yet even Babylon remains under God’s authority. Death does not have the final word.

Quoting Hosea 6:1–2, Bishop Nzimande proclaimed: “*He has torn us, but He will heal us. He has injured us, but He will bind up our wounds... On the third day He will raise us up.*”

The message was clear: we are a people of resurrection hope. The third day always comes. Just as Jonah emerged after three days, just as Abraham saw God provide on the third day, just as Israel crossed into promise after waiting, and above all, just as Christ rose from the grave—so too does God bring life after devastation.

Mrs Hlongwane’s life was described as one of quiet strength, dignity, warmth, and faithful service. Born on 25 October 1976 in Lusikisiki, the fourth of seven children of the late Robert and Nontobeko Tshaka, she pursued education with dedication—studying at Nyazi JSS, Mhlanga JSS, Ndaliso SSS, Sithetho FET College, and later Cikirha College of Education. She served as an educator before marrying Bishop Hlongwane on 5 December 2002. In supporting his calling, she embraced her own ministry—serving both in the Church and in local government, including Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and Ntabankulu Local Municipality.

Rev. Nzimande used a powerful illustration: when the Reserve Bank recalls old currency, it does not discard it—it restores and renews it. Faces may change, but the original value remains secured in the vault. So too with the soul. While earthly forms fade, the “Undalashé”—the origin—returns to God.

Mrs Hlongwane has not been lost. She has returned to her Origin.

Her value—her true worth—was never merely in her roles as wife, mother, leader, or servant, but in the eternal imprint of God upon her life. “*Abahlwanyela ngenyembezi, bavuna ngovuyo*”—those who sow in tears shall reap with joy.

To the Hlongwane family and the wider Church, the message resounds:

*“He has torn us—but He will heal us.  
He has wounded us—but He will bind us.  
On the third day—He will raise us up.*

May the Lord guard and strengthen the family.  
Singabantu bemini yesithathu. Amen.



*She is survived by her husband, Rev. M Hlongwane and their two daughters Talita Olothando and Liyabona Mandilive, her mother and siblings*

## IN MEMORIAM

Rev Ossie Kretzmann

*Loving, God, who brought us to birth, help us to live as those who are prepared for death.  
Enable us to obey Your call to receive the baton and run the race set before us.  
Thank you, Lord Jesus, that You are the author and finisher of our race. Amen*



# YMG BOOK REVIEW

By Rev. Mike Vorster

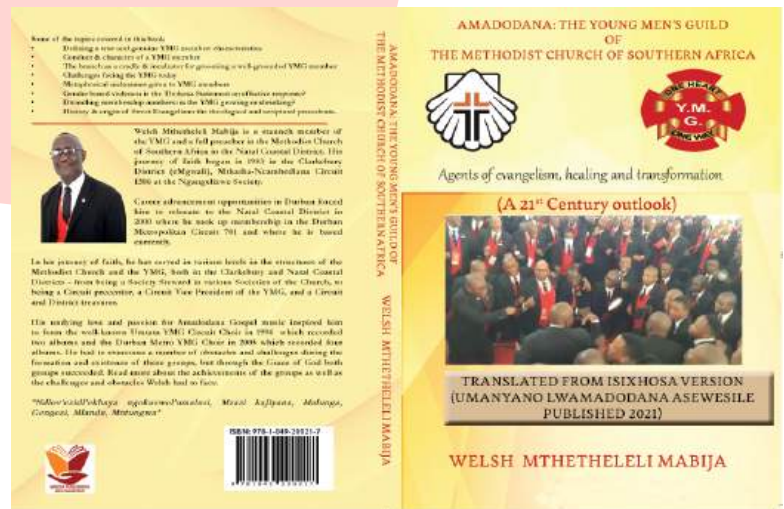
The main theme running through the book is about the YMG existing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2001 to 2100) but still serving the same purpose of existence and mandate as it did during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1901-2000); but in a different and changed environment and context. In presenting the story of the YMG to his readers in the 12 chapters of the book (240 pages), the author looks at the movement through the eye of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, consciously moving away from the traditional approach of focusing only on the history of the YMG as it evolved since 1912, and taking a helicopter view of the organisation as a whole and zooming in to understand its internal dynamics as it exists today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century where the environment and context are completely different from those that existed during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when it was formed. The author looks critically at today's congregation and its diverse needs and expectations and asks the YMG whether its preaching strategies are relevant and contextual enough to respond to those diverse needs and expectations. The author gives advice to the YMG leadership about ways in which the organisation can remain relevant and contextual in the next 100 years, if it is willing to "relocate" itself from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century way of evangelising and "reposition" itself strategically in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to proclaim the same (of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century) saving Gospel message of Jesus Christ differently, in the context of a changing environment, to a cosmopolitan congregation with diverse needs.

The author gives a list of some serious challenges facing the YMG today and reasons why the movement is perceived by some—both inside and outside the Church—to be gradually losing its former glory and dignity.

Drawing from his own personal experience as a long-standing member of the YMG since 1986, and having served in different capacities within the structures of the movement and the Church, the author takes his readers along with him in a journey through the 12 chapters of the book, in search of a theological definition of a true and genuine indodana, his character and behaviour, and his role as an exemplary image of the Methodist Church in the community. He asks a question to the leadership; whether it is the YMG uniform that defines a true and genuine indodana or the way he conducts and behaves himself, inside and outside the Church? At the end of the chapter, the author arrives at a possible definition.

As a training resource material, the book contains some interesting topics that can serve as a valuable tool in equipping on-Trials as well as already robed members. The author reminds Amadodana that they are the custodians of Methodist traditions and customs in evangelism and music, and that they have a critical role to play in Church growth as a mission group within the Methodist Church, a role to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation in a Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations.

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book deals with the formation of the Durban Metropolitan Circuit and the role played by Amadodana.



## Book reviews

"Any reader who lays his hand on this book, will not resist sharing the information with a person next to him because of its powerful message about the YMG and the Methodist Church. I have no doubt in my mind that the information contained in this book can be used as training material for new and existing members of the organisation. It is an archive of wisdom, learning, and teaching written by a person who understands ubudodana and what it means to be a ndodana living a Christ-like life. Those who read it will not only grow in faith but will understand their organisation and the purpose of its existence." *Rev. Fakude, T.J.: former Natal Coastal District President, former District Vice Chair of the Natal West District of the MCSA, and currently serving as the YMG General Education Officer*

"I have learnt a lot from this book about life in general and how the YMG can shape and mould the character of a YMG member and make him a responsible Christian man, a father, and a husband who is a role model for his community. It equips Christian men to be able to stand up to the challenges of life. Amadodana, on-Trial, and existing, would benefit a lot if some of the topics discussed in this book could be incorporated into the syllabus and constitution of the YMG" *Gqwaru, L.S. former YMG Vice President and Treasurer, South Durban Circuit*

"I have learnt a lot by reading this book. I feel equipped in terms of knowledge about the YMG and the Methodist Church. It teaches, it empowers spiritually, and I believe that even those who are not members of the YMG who wish to join the organisation and the Methodist Church, will benefit by reading this book." *Jafta, A.M.: Chairperson, Cato Manor YMG branch, Durban Metro Circuit*

"Thank you very much Tata for this book. I have learned a lot about the Methodist Church and the formation of the Durban Metropolitan Circuit" *Mcetywa, M. I.: YMG member in the Durban Metro Circuit*

"This book is so useful as a source of information that I would gladly recommend it to anyone who calls himself indodana, including new and existing members—to have this book in their study rooms to benefit in terms of knowledge and spiritual growth. Amadodana are like an ambulance that carries broken souls for healing into the hands of Jesus.

Topics discussed in this book will not benefit Amadodana only but will also benefit those who are non YMG members. Please Ndlovu, continue with your good work.

Continues on page 6

When amaNdlovu say aswele uMalusi, we say we have a Shepherd, and that Shepherd is Jesus Christ through this beautiful piece of work”  
*Rev. Mdoda, L.: past General President and District President of the YMG in the Clarkebury District.*

“I feel humbled, honoured, and proud to have in my hand a book written by a member of the YMG in my Circuit. A wonderful piece of work that will be a treasure and heritage for all Christian men and anyone who reads it. As one continues reading it, one can feel that the author was inspired by the Holy Spirit and has a wonderful gift to carry his message across.

The chapter about the formation of the Durban Metropolitan Circuit drew my attention and interest as well as the author’s frankness and fearlessness in tackling the topical subject of gender-based violence in chapter 4. He is challenging the YMG to clean its house first, before going out and saying to the world ‘not in our name’. Tata Mabija did not defend perpetrators of gender-based violence just because they are men, and he is a man, but he called a spade a spade and confronted the issue head-on.

Good luck Ndlovu in your writing skills. I trust that God will continue sustaining you in your efforts and keep you humble all the time”.  
*Rev. Ralo, B.: YMG President, Durban Metro Circuit*

“The book is written by a man who is a living testimony of one who journeyed with Christ since the early stages of his life, when his father used to hold him by the hand on their way to church, in Albert Street every Sunday morning. That is when the Gospel fire started burning, resulting to what the YMG has today, a well-grounded YMG member, an author, and a role model for any aspiring man.

We are grateful to Mfen’ayigugi, his father, and Mrs. Magengelele, his Sunday school teacher, who planted a seed that germinated and became a gift for the Church of God. Let me put it categorically: those who drink from this well, will never thirst again (John 4:13-15)”  
*Tsheketshe, G.N.: YMG Education Officer, Gideon Baqwa Memorial Circuit*

“After reading this book, I am inspired by the following chapters:  
 Chapter 2: Testing of on-Trials for readiness and admission to full membership of the YMG  
 Chapter 7: Tendency in the YMG to undermine and look down upon others’ views and contributions  
 Chapter 9: Metaphorical nicknames given to YMG members to symbolise their evangelical role and emotional connection with the Methodist Church congregation.  
 I feel empowered in terms of knowledge, because I did not know some of these names. Now I am walking in the light”  
*Novukuza, M.: Vice President, Local Preacher’s Association, Durban Metro Circuit*

## 50 YEAR’S OF WOMEN’S ORDINATION

**THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

*Celebrating 50 years of*  
**WOMEN’S ORDINATION**  
 In the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (1976–2026)  
*Celebrating Faith, Courage, and Community Impact*

**THEME:**  
**SHE ANSWERED THE CALL:**  
 50 Years of Women Shaping God’s Mission in the MCSA

**50 YEARS**  
*Ordaining Women in Ministry*  
 Methodist Church of Southern Africa

**SUNDAY**  
**08 March 2026 | Time: 09h30**

Mondeor Methodist Church  
 222 Cadogan Ave, Mondeor, JHB SOUTH, 2091

**LIVE STREAMING** Service will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube

## ECO-JUSTICE DESK LAUNCH

**THE CHURCH IS GOING GREEN**  
**Launching the Eco-Justice Desk**

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa invites you to witness the launch of a new movement dedicated to caring for creation and advancing environmental justice through faith in action.

- Creation Care:** Protecting and restoring God’s creation
- Justice Action:** Standing with communities most affected by environmental challenges
- Faithful Living:** Encouraging sustainable lifestyles as Christian discipleship

Every small action creates a big impact. Together, we can build a greener future by embracing eco-friendly choices, reducing waste, and protecting our planet.

**Together, let us care for creation and build a hopeful future.**

**YOU ARE INVITED!**  
 Join us as we take this important step together.

**Launch Date: 7 March 2026**  
**Format: Live-streamed launch event**

# MUIZENBERG METHODIST CHURCH - 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

— By Cilla Lowen

On 12 October 2025, the congregation of Muizenberg Methodist Church celebrated the church's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Filled to capacity, past and present clergy and congregants gathered to share memories of what Muizenberg Methodist Church, as a spiritual home, has meant to them and so many others throughout the years.

The Methodist seed was sown in South Africa in 1814 when Britain took control of the Cape Colony, and soldiers' informal worship meetings led to the appointment of Barnabas Shaw of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, as an official minister.

W. Gordon Mears, known for his role in church leadership, education, and social witness, wrote in *Methodism in the Cape: An Outline* "Musenberg (sic) was one of the preaching places established by Barnabas Shaw and visited by his associates and successors. It is therefore one of the earliest Wesleyan outposts. In 1897 the committee in charge of the Mission Hall, Muizenberg, offered its use, free of rent for a year, provided that at least one monthly service be held and a Sunday School kept."

As F.E. Bollen, a Methodist minister, missionary, and author, reminisces in his diary: "It all started in a little hall near the railway station. We had a full congregation on the opening day."

This humble wood-and-iron structure provided a launchpad for the congregation, who as fellowship grew, resolved to raise funds for the erection of a permanent church at a cost of two thousand pounds. In 1900 a site was purchased for the building of a handsome stone-dressed church that became the centre of Methodist worship in Muizenberg, and attracted congregants from along the southern coast.



But the congregation outgrew this church also, and in 1930 another site was purchased alongside the existing manse, between Marchmont and Towers Roads, which is where Muizenberg Methodist Church, also known as the Church of the Good Shepherd, stands today.

In addition to being a place of worship, there were many other activities—among them the Sunday School, the Youth Groups, and two Women's Auxiliaries.

The Sunday School Anniversary Service, Annual Prizegiving, and Sunday School Picnic were highlights of the year. The Young Men's Fellowship Class, started in 1930, evolved into a Youth Group that later combined with their counterparts in Fish Hoek and Simon's Town who ultimately formed Cell groups for outreach programmes.

The Muizenberg branch of the Women's Auxiliary, established in 1921, is one of the older branches in the Cape of Good Hope District. In 1926 a second Women Auxiliary was started to accommodate working women, but shifting needs of the two groups led them amalgamate to play a critical role in fundraising, serving on Leaders' Meetings, and supporting many worthy causes that included among others the Bible Women, Marsh and Heatherdale Children's Homes, Kendrick House, Sen-Cit, and Huis Harmonie Methodist Homes for the Aged.

When the Women's Auxiliary came to an end, the ministries it had faithfully supported were lovingly carried forward in a new way. A Knitting Group was formed, bringing together caring hands and compassionate hearts to create knitted and crocheted items for local charities and mission outreach. Just as importantly, the group has become a place of fellowship, offering friendship,



encouragement, and a welcoming presence for those who may feel alone or in need of support.

The nature of worship music in our church also evolved over time. The Praise Session was initiated by the late Brian Thebus and the late Mike English. Mike, a faithful congregant for more than 70 years, introduced the guitar into our worship services. What started as a simple addition has since 2021 grown into a full Praise and Worship Group, now led by Bryan Jacobs. With the inclusion of keyboards and drums alongside guitars, our worship music has developed into a more contemporary and vibrant expression of praise.

As COVID changed how we gathered, our church adapted accordingly, finding new ways through social media and other forms of communication to maintain connection, care, and shared worship. And as community needs increased, the Knitting Group stepped up by supplying blankets, household goods, and pre-loved clothing to those who had lost everything, and making baby clothes, toys, and blankets for Thula Baba project, Light a Sparke, and the Smile Foundation, and beanies, gloves, scarves, and jerseys for the Christian David School and a local safe house for children.

For more than 125 years, Muizenberg Methodist Church has stood as a dynamic, God-purposed community of faith—rooted in love, shaped by service, and committed to nurturing families and reaching out to the wider community. Truly living up to its name, the Church of the Good Shepherd, generations of congregants have upheld a legacy of faithful care, guiding hearts, offering hope, and walking together in God's grace.

Reference:  
The Methodist Church of Southern Africa. (Oct 2000). *Muizenberg Methodist Church Centenary Journal 1900-2000*.



# SANIBONANI: HOW TO AVERT KILLING GOD'S CREATURES: Re-homing Guttural Toads

— By Rev. Mike Vorster



Of all my suggestions of what to write and reflect on in the last *Another Dimension*, I have decided to talk a bit about 'Re-Homing Guttural Toads'.

What is a guttural toad? Make some time and visit the internet and google it.

## From nostalgia to annoyance

The sound for a good while reminded me of sleeping at my Granny's house, below the cross of Jesus. My Granny was a devout Catholic. I always felt safe when she was around. Above my bed was a picture of Jesus on the cross. Across the road was a sizeable pond; and every night I would go to sleep with the sound of frogs croaking with the accompaniment of the sound of the occasional train in the far distance. It was a happy space.

We moved into our current house about ten years ago. We have a wonderful, tiered water feature. And guess what? Yes, guttural toads moved in. At first the sound of the loud croaking of these indigenous guttural toads, together with the sound of trains in the far distance gave me a curious sense of comfort. Good memories of staying with my now departed Granny became a 'feel-good moment'. Then the nostalgic emotions turned to annoyance every time I heard these critters.

## Why the change?

Our neighbours across the road informed us that the toads were invading their swimming pool. He said it affected his sleep. He had put chlorine underneath our gate, hoping this will deter them. Not a chance—they kept going to his place. At first, I thought they did come from us and then realised that it was unknown where they came from. It is as though they parachuted in with stealth and captured our ponds for breeding purposes. Hundreds of tadpoles re-appropriated our ponds.

It was suggested that we put chlorine in the pond water and this will kill or deter them. No ways, these creatures are indigenous to the area—this was their home; we were the invaders.

Then I had a light bulb moment. Why don't I catch and re-home them (in

keeping with our Conference theme of Relocating to the other side), in the nearby Burman Bush which is one of the green indigenous spaces protected by wildlife rangers and security guards. So, with children's fishing nets I set about catching them. My first capture was around twenty in the first week. I placed them in a transparent bucket with holes for ventilation and some pond water for an overnight stay which I inaptly named 'holding cell' and later changed the name to the 'transfer lounge'.

As time went on, less guttural toads came into our yard. Yet I still heard them croaking across the road and in the neighbour's yard behind us. Well, we were not the culprits.

Nowadays the minute I hear a croak, I clamber up the rocks and instead of using a net, I catch them with my hands. They make a distinct sound of fear—probably thinking this is their last day on earth and they will become part of the circle of life and death. But no, they are placed in the transit lounge—an equally scary place—and one could hear them frog-jumping to get out. The lounge is secured. Only once did a guttural toad escape. After a frog and human chase around our garage, he or she (I have not yet figured out which is which) was placed again in the transit lounge.

The next day the guttural toads have a mystery drive to Burman Bush. The security and wildlife rangers thought I was going to release a snake. They were relieved when I told them it was only frogs. Nowadays they know me and smile when I arrive and tell their companions this is the frog man.

It is interesting when the toads are released into the bush—they all behave differently. Some remain motionless when released and eventually realise it is safe and hop and jump into the bush. Others jump out straight away and disappear into the bush rapidly. I first take a pic for archiving purposes. Sometimes they smile, most times they just get going.

Yes, now they face the cycle of life and death again, as they become a source

or nourishment for snakes, civets, and birds. This is how nature should be. Chlorine would be an agonising death with no purpose.

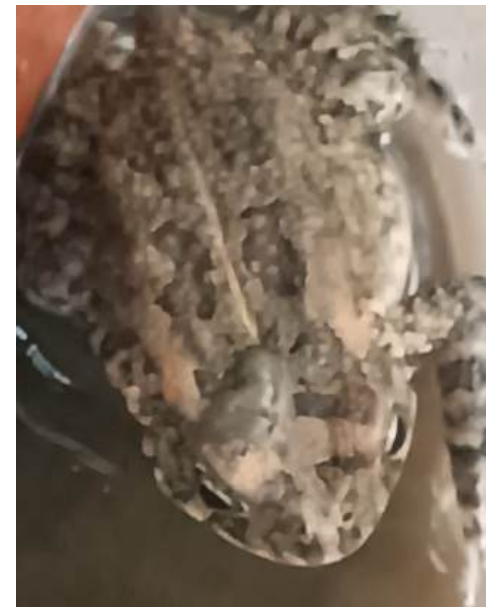
I now wear a silver frog pendant in support of the African Snake Institute.



What would you do? Chlorine or re-home?

What sounds move you into a happy space?

The eco-universe is speaking to us through these wonderful and annoying critters. They are saying 'let us live as we should. If I go, so will you?'



# LENTEN REFLECTION – The Wilderness We Share (Matthew 4:1–11)

— By Rev. Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu

*Theologian, storyteller, justice centred EDI specialist, author, Methodist minister, speaker.*



Jesus enters the wilderness carrying a body that knows hunger, fatigue, and vulnerability. The wilderness is not a metaphor reserved for a few. It is the human place of exposure, where certainty loosens and the questions beneath survival become unavoidable. Many walk this wilderness. Those navigating poverty and economic exclusion. Those whose accents, bodies, or histories make them visible in uncomfortable ways. Those in forgotten towns, strained communities, or collapsing industries. Those who carry racial wounds, gendered expectations, or the exhaustion of constantly proving worth. Those facing illness, disability, loneliness, grief, or the quiet shame of feeling left behind.

The wilderness gathers people whose stories may look different, yet whose hunger feels painfully familiar. The first temptation meets that hunger. “Turn stones into bread.” The invitation is to resolve suffering quickly, to grasp whatever secures survival, even if the soul becomes smaller in the process. For some, the pressure is economic. For others, it is the demand to assimilate, overperform, or silence parts of themselves in order to belong. Jesus refuses to let hunger dictate identity. Survival matters, but dignity cannot be negotiated.

The second temptation distorts faith itself. Scripture is used to demand spectacle, certainty, and visible proof of divine favour. Many know the weight of religious language that has dismissed their pain, questioned their faith, or encouraged silent endurance rather than honest lament. Jesus resists a faith that performs rather than heals.

The final temptation offers power detached from justice. Recognition without responsibility. Security without solidarity. It is the subtle invitation to accept a place within systems that wound others, simply because the alternative feels too costly.

Jesus refuses power that requires compromised worship or diminished compassion. In that refusal, Jesus stands with all who are pressured to trade integrity for safety, voice for acceptance, or solidarity for advancement.

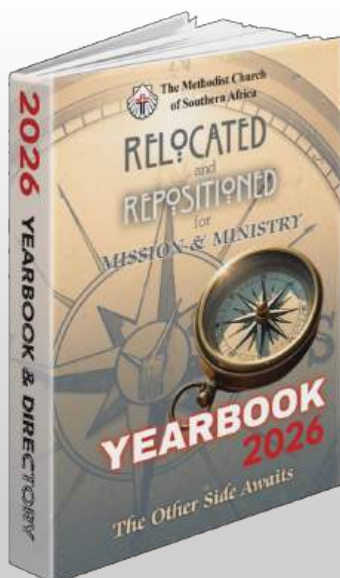
The wilderness does not erase difference, but it reveals connection. Some enter it through structural injustice. Some through economic loss. Some through personal grief. Some through identities that the world struggles to honour. The pathways differ, yet the longing for dignity, belonging, and truth is shared. Lent invites a different kind of attentiveness.

Where is your wilderness today?  
What hunger is asking you to compromise your truth?  
Where might another person’s wilderness look different from yours, yet still call for your compassion?  
The angels come not to one group alone, but wherever resistance, honesty, and trust are quietly practised. They appear as strength, community, unexpected understanding, and the gentle assurance that dignity is never conditional. The wilderness is not a competition of suffering. It is a meeting place of humanity, where the refusal to abandon oneself becomes the beginning of solidarity with others. And perhaps that is the quiet transformation within Matthew 4.

Jesus does not leave the wilderness with power over others, but with clarity about how to walk among them, especially those whose hunger, in all its forms, has been ignored.

The wilderness becomes bearable when we recognise we are not alone.

Faithfulness is often the quiet decision to keep walking on uneven ground.



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# CELEBRATING LEGENDS OF METHODISM IN AFRICA – LINKS, JACOB: First South African Methodist Minister and Martyr

—By Prof. R. Simangaliso Kumalo



*The purpose of this column is to share the life stories of Methodist leaders who have made a remarkable impact on the life and ministry of the Methodist Church across the African continent. These early leaders served in, through, for, and alongside the Church—often under extremely difficult and even dangerous conditions—yet remained steadfast in their commitment to both the Church and the continent.*

*Many were visionary and courageous figures whose leadership contributed significantly to the growth of the Church, the expansion of its programmes, and its influence within society. The shape and character of contemporary Methodism owe much to their dedication, sacrifice, and faithful service. The column will feature ordained and lay leaders—men, women, and, where appropriate, young people—whose contributions helped shape the Connexion and the broader African context.*

*Some of these individuals were themselves profoundly shaped by the ministry of the Methodist Church and went on to become influential leaders who strengthened institutions and transformed lives within and beyond the Church. Significantly, many can trace their formative development and leadership journey to the influence of Methodism and its people.*

*This column is therefore not simply an exercise in recording history. Its purpose is to inspire contemporary Methodists to learn from those who have gone before—to glean insights, lessons, and encouragement that can inform present ministry. By reflecting on these stories, readers are invited to draw wisdom for their own leadership and to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing transformation of the Church and society.*

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*I can no longer endure, the Bushmen[sic] have worn me out.*

Jacob Links has gone down in the history of the Methodist Church, firstly as the first South African and person of color to have offered for the Wesleyan Ministry. Secondly, he must be remembered for being the first Methodist martyr in Southern Africa.

We do not have information on his birth and early life. We get to know him when he is recruited by Barnabas Shaw in 1818 to be a Methodist and offers for the ministry. First, he started by helping Rev. Shaw in the mission station at Lilyfontein. He is described as having been a man of “intelligence, ability and courage who quickly learnt to read, write and speak both English and Dutch.” He was accepted as a probationer minister by the British Conference of 1818. Then he was stationed in “Little Namaqua as Assistant Missionary (what today is known as a probationer minister) to the Bushmen [sic].” In 1822 he was received into full Connexion, meaning that he was ordained, thus becoming the first indigenous South African to become a Methodist Minister.

He worked amongst the San (previously called Bushmen), as a nomad, eating what they ate and living their lives until he moved back to Lilyfontein Mission Station, admitting that “I can no longer endure, the Bushmen [sic] have worn me out.”

He was sent to Grootfontein South as a missionary. They settled amongst some tribes there and helped them to barter cattle with the ships passing through. However, the ministry failed and they returned to Cape Town to ask Rev. Shaw to allow them to explore other areas such as Walvis Bay. In 1822, Jacob Links and James Archbell sailed from Cape Town to Walvis Bay to inspect the area if it was good for a mission station, returning in November of the same year. On their return to Lilyfontein they were very excited about the possibility of a mission station in that area and were committed to going back there to start Methodist work. Unfortunately, Shaw then sent Archbell to Makwasi to assist Samuel Broadbent and Links was left behind working with Johannes Jager and Rev. William Threlfall.

In 1825, in the middle of a severe drought, Rev. William Threlfall, Jacob Links, and Johannes Jager left Lilyfontein to link up with Chief Gummap and his tribe. Although Chief Gummap’s tribe was friendly to the missionaries and urged them to go back to Lilyfontein for their safety, they did not go back. Instead, they wrote a letter that exonerated Chief Gammup’s people, in case anything happened to them. Being committed to set up a mission station, they settled between Fish River and Warm Bath persuading some chiefs to work with them, but their requests were rejected. It was then that they were murdered by some “treacherous guide for the sake of their pack-oxen and their goods.” The murder took place after 19<sup>th</sup> July 1825 because they had written and signed a letter that exonerated Chief Gammup and his people in case anything happened to them.

## ***‘If we never return’***

Copy of certificate to the chief of Warm Bath Warm Bath, July 19<sup>th</sup>. 1825.

To whom it may concern.

We William Threlfall, Jacob Links, and Johannes Jager do by this writing make it known that if we never return from the Fish River or the nations and tribes to the north of it, that no unpleasant reflections ought to be cast on the Captain and tribe called the Bondle-Zuaart, because they have permitted us to pass through their country into the dangers before us, from which they say we shall never escape with our lives. They have faithfully warned us, but being disposed to proceed in what we all think to be our duty to God and fellow men, should we never return we acquit them from all guilt in our misfortune.

Signed Wm. Threlfall

Jacob Links

Johannes Jager

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1825, after prayers in the company of Plaatjie Saumap Naugaap, the missionaries went to sleep. Naugaap betrayed them by calling other Bushmen, who came and killed them. Methodist legend says that in their last prayer they had sung Jacob Links’ favourite hymn ‘*The nearest way is known to God,*’ with the verse

*When creature aid would all be vain, His promise with us shall remain.*

*The same through one eternal day, when earthly joys are fled away. Last verse:*

*Continues on page 11*

*In need, our only friend is He, who gives the final victory?*

When they were murdered, William Threlfall was only twenty-nine years old and Links was twenty-six years old (Cragg, 2011:30). The murderers of those Methodist missionaries, two of whom were the first South Africans to have joined the Wesleyan ministry, shook the missionary circles.

Plaatjie Saumap Naugaap and Conghaap were caught in 1827 for the murder. Conghaap was sentenced to 40 lashes with a sjambok and Naugaap was condemned to death. The two belonged to the Bondelzwart tribe under Chief Abram Christian. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1827 Naugaap was escorted to Silver Fontein where he was executed by 6 of his tribesmen in front of Chief Abram Christian and Witbooi the chief of the Pella and a number of other Hottentots for the crime of killing the Methodist missionaries. Also present in

the execution were Deputy Landrost, the Field Cornet, the Government Chaplain for the district, and several others.

Naugaap was buried in Silver Fontein where he was executed. However, his head was dug up by Carl Frederich on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1827. Frederiech was a professional collector for German Museums, who at the time was travelling in South Africa.

So, the one who killed those innocent missionaries, amongst whom was Jacob Links the indigenous pioneer Methodist minister, did not rest in peace. As a result, Jacob Links will always be remembered by the Methodist people as the first South African Methodist minister and one of the three Methodist martyrs in the history of this denomination. Indeed, his and his companion's blood watered the seed of Methodism that grew out in the sub-region.

## MAKE JESUS THE CENTRE OF YOUR EXISTENCE

*By T K Sonjica*

In his maiden Covenant Service at the Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit-312 Rev. Madoda Ngwendu called upon his congregants to make Jesus the absolute centre of their existence. The service which was packed to the rafters had the likes of Bishop Mongameli Noqayi, Rev. Vukile Mehana, Rev. Andile Mbethe, Rev. Sonwabile Vava and their spouses.

- To be repositioned goes with costs, sometimes unbearable;
- Relocating sometimes goes through storms with blowing winds to the extent of one believing that one wouldn't reach one's destination.

"Please agree with me that as the other side awaits for us, we need to make Jesus the absolute centre of our existence", he added.

Ngwendu further explained that according to the Holy Scriptures, the journey the Presiding Bishop Nzimande is talking about is being invited by the One who knows everything, our Omniscient God. That means God knows what His people will come across along the way because He is God who knows everything. He reasoned that God can't tell us to cross over to the other side when He doesn't know what it is that is waiting for us in the journey to the other side.

Rev. Ngwendu told his congregation that what helped Jesus' disciples on the journey across to the other side was remembering that the journey was not their plan. It was God's plan. Then when they realised that they didn't have the power to withstand nature, they woke up the Creator of nature and informed Him that they were about to die, (Luke 8:24).

He continued and stated that the Church is the source of God's plan for the salvation of humanity. He referred to the Church as people who have been called by God in order to fulfill God's plan. "If we do not include Jesus as our source of being, we will be doomed. That is why I say in order to

be able to withstand storms and the hurdles of the 2026 journey, we need to make Jesus the source of our wisdom, because our existence was God's divine plan", he emphasised.

"We are God's agenda and therefore even now we're invited to God's agenda. What cripples us is that while God invites us, we are busy with our agendas which are comfortable to us. We even forget that we are God's agenda", Rev. Ngwendu revealed one of humanity's weaknesses.

He reminded the congregants that this is the kind of behaviour that disturbed the Israelites in Joshua's book. This is after God had travelled with them from Egypt and led them as a shadowing cloud during the day, and provided them with light at night as a huge flame. He fought for them against Pharaoh's army and paved their way across the Red Sea to Canaan. Thereafter they forgot God.

In Joshua 24:15 God appeared when Joshua was troubled and requested him to remind his people who God is together with what He had done for their fathers. Rev. Ngwendu pointed out that Joshua stood up in a meeting, which, if it was in the situation at Zwelitsha Central Mission, would have been in a Quarterly Meeting. He told the Israelites that they had forgotten where God had picked them up and what He had done for them. He called them to "...be respectful to God, and worship Him to the uttermost".

On its own, the book of Joshua 24:15 states that "If you are not willing to serve Him, decide today whom you will serve...."



*Rev. Madoda Ngwendu delivering his maiden covenant message to his congregants at Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit 312.*

The day's scriptures were Joshua 24:14–25 and Luke 9:23–27. Ngwendu described the day's service as a revival of the congregant's covenant with God. He added that his call to his congregants to make Jesus their absolute centre of existence should be used as the Circuit's theme for the year 2026.

He reminded all present that the Presiding Bishop's theme (Rev. Pumla Nzimande) for the year 2026 states, "Relocated and repositioned for Mission and Ministry: The other side awaits". Rev. Ngwendu explained that:

*Continues on page 12*

As for my family and me, we will serve the LORD". Joshua conveyed this message, his last message after God had disbursed the inheritance to the Israelites.

### Discipleship

On discipleship Rev. Ngwendu quoted Luke 9:23 wherein he states that "If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget self, take up his cross every day, and follow me". Acknowledging Bonhoeffer, he explained that taking up the cross comes with suffering, rejection, and even death to those who carry their crosses and follow Jesus.

He explained that after Jesus had told his disciples the journey of discipleship they had been called for is dangerous, has enemies, and leads to death, Jesus said to them and to those who were following them, 'you have a choice, and now this is the time for each and every one of you to choose whether one chooses to follow Jesus or anybody else.'

Citing Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the cost of discipleship, Rev. Ngwendu aligned it with forgetting oneself and knowing Jesus more than one knows oneself. That is to see only Him before oneself.

Rev. Ngwendu advised that "When it is uphill, one must focus only on Jesus. Even if things do not go well, one has only to see Him. He leads the way, keep close to him."

He argued that following Jesus is a heavy load, because during the times of Jesus' disciples, the cross was a heavy object. "Lifting a cross needed more strength and would be heavier if carrying it was done on a daily basis".

Rev. Ngwendu reflected that, "With the year 2026 each one who is here ... today ... has come to carry one's cross so that one carries it daily and follows Jesus. Bonhoeffer states that crosses have different weights. I know how heavy my cross is, I do not know how heavy your cross is."

"When we make Jesus the source of our existence, He is able to assist us in carrying our crosses, because He, Himself overcame his cross on Calvary. All those who need the power to carry the cross during 2026, the road has been opened. Amen", Rev. Ngwendu concluded.



Rev. Madoda Ngwendu preaching at the Covenant Service at Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit 312 recently.



Rev. Madoda Ngwendu singing with his congregants at Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit 312 during a Covenant Service recently.

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# LETTER TO THE EDITOR: ONE AND UNDECIDED

Dear Editor

When the late Rev. Pierre Naude set out to write a document which included the well-known MCSA mantra “One and Undivided,” he discovered that the Microsoft spell-checker (spell-chequer?) had changed the phrase to read “One and Undecided.”

Well, if the Lord can use a dumb ass as a conduit for His word, He can just as well use a dumb piece of computer software.

**The fact is that the MCSA has come to embrace such a wide spectrum of doctrinal perspectives that it no longer contends for its own stated position.**

One long-standing DEWCOM member when asked the direct question: “Should MCSA ministers be permitted to practice as sangomas?” replied as follows,  
*“The MCSA is engaging this subject in an intentional way. I continue to be open to the various views that have been expressed in this process—it feels right for me not to rush into this conversation with a bunch of predetermined certainties and aggressive judgments.”*

He concluded by saying,  
*“Of course, at the end of the day I will have to make up my own mind and own my particular position.”*

Yet this question has been on the DEWCOM agenda for some three years. This is quite long enough to do the necessary due diligence to arrive at a conclusion.

Yes, certainly listen to the different views, especially to those advocating the “Dual-calling” position and then evaluate this against the benchmark of Scripture which we claim to be our supreme authority in matters of faith and practise. The complete incompatibility of the two faiths will emerge soon enough. (see the following table comparing African Traditional Religion with Christianity)

ATR	Christianity	Scripture Reference
Oral Tradition	The Holy Bible	2 Tim 3:16
Works	Grace	Eph. 2:8
Afterlife	Resurrection	Jn 14:6, 1 Cor 15:20
Living Death	Eternal Life	Jn 3:16
Fear	Love	1 Jn 4:18
Good Fortune	Salvation	Acts 4:12
Good and Bad people	All have sinned	Rom 3:23
God is remote	God is with us	Mat 1:23, Is 7:14
God is unknowable	Jesus has made God known	Jn 1:18, 1 Jn 1:1-3
Bad Spirits	Satan and Demons	Mat 4:1-11, Rev 20:2
Intermediaries are part of creation	Mediator is creator of all things	Jn 1:3, Col 1:16

It is not simply that there are stark conflicts between the theologies which underpin the two faiths, but they demand different allegiances: During the process of ukuthwasa which is the training process for becoming a sangoma, the initiate

must pass through a rite of passage known as *imvuma kufa* (literally to accept death) in which they must die to themselves and rise with a new persona in which they submit to the ancestors or a particular ancestor. This contrasts with the transaction in which a person comes to faith in Christ.

*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*  
 – Rom 6:4  
*So, you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.* – Rom 6:11

So, which is it to be? “Alive to God in Christ Jesus and submitted to His will” or “Alive to the ancestors and submitted to their will”?

“A person cannot serve two masters” says Jesus. Clearly then, the answer to the question, “Should MCSA ministers be permitted to practice as sangomas?” is, **No, they should not!**\*

This answer emerges clearly and unequivocally from Scripture.

Why is it then that DEWCOM having deliberated on the matter for three years or more, continues to ‘halt between two opinions?’

Apart from the fact that certain DEWCOM members are ambivalent regarding the matter, I suspect it is because returning such a verdict will be unpopular with certain persons and thus our unity will be disturbed. For we claim to be “One and undivided.”

The pale brand of unity that says, “let’s all get together and love one another and not worry overmuch about what we believe,” bears little resemblance to the unity which Jesus desires for His church when He prays to the Father, *“...that they may be one even as we are one...”*

**For the unity of the Godhead is infused with both love and truth:**

*Jesus is the way the truth and the life.*  
*The Holy Spirit leads us into all the truth.*  
*The Father seeks those who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth.*  
**“Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth”,** prays Jesus.

That is why it is by, *“speaking the truth in love that we grow up unto Him who is the head which is Christ.”*  
 That is how, *“we attain to the unity of the Faith, to maturity in Christ... so that we may no longer be children... tossed to and fro ...by every wind of doctrine”.* (Eph 4:13-15)

It seems unlikely that DEWCOM will bring a resolution to Conference which includes the above bold conclusion.\*

Meanwhile the good ship MCSA remains somewhat rudderless regarding these matters and closet sangomas slip through under the radar into our ministry.

Meanwhile, we remain, “One and Undecided.”

Peter Frow.

# A CELEBRATION OF THE LIVES OF DEIRDRE AND OSSIE KRETZMANN

— By Peter Frow

Ossie and Deidre passed away peacefully within hours of each other on 13 February 2026. Neither was able to recover from the critical injuries resulting from a car crash on the N3 near Pietermaritzburg.

## Remembering Deidre

Deidre was the quiet strength, the gentle heart, and the unwavering anchor of the family. She possessed a wonderful sense of humour and a clear opinion. She never hesitated to vocally participate in the sermon from the pews, which she felt qualified to do as she was a Local Preacher herself. She was a passionate advocate for intercessory prayer.

Her creativity shone brightly in everything she did, from tending her beautiful garden at Amber Valley to her quilting and, of course, her baking. Her fudge was legendary—she was, without a doubt, the best fudge maker on the planet.

Deidre was born in 1944. She did her schooling in Kenya. She then travelled to London, completing her A levels in one year after which she enrolled at Rhodes University, which was where she met Ossie.

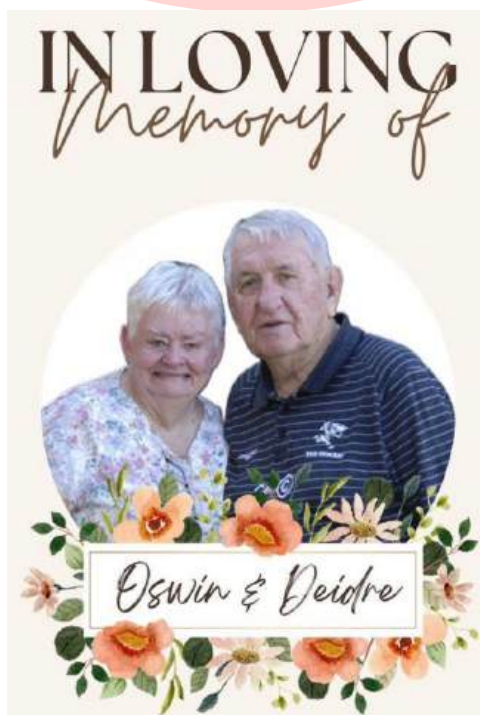
Deidre had a unique gift for making everyone feel seen and loved. She was a devoted friend, a confidante, and a constant cheerleader. Her warmth and boundless capacity for kindness will be forever missed.

A testament to her spirit: *To celebrate her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2004, Deidre bravely climbed Mount Kilimanjaro.*

## Remembering Ossie

Ossie, by contrast, was the vibrant storyteller, the adventurer, and the man who seemed to know everyone. Most importantly, he dedicated his life to his calling in service to God and was a man who could provide spiritual wisdom, healing, and guidance. His energy was infectious, his opinions were strong, and his heart was vast. Ossie was a man of immense passion: firstly, his deep love and devotion to God; secondly, his enthusiasm for Rugby; and thirdly, his talent for organising.

Born in 1939 of German parents, he grew up on a farm in the Eastern Cape. He attended school in Potsdam but was forced to leave at the age of fifteen to work. At the age of 19 he invited Jesus into his life, an experience that was as profound as it was life-changing. He was later able to matriculate, and having felt a



call to ministry, he attended Rhodes University, where he earned a degree in theology at the age of 29. In 1968 he was ordained as a Methodist minister. During his 36 years in ministry, he was to pastor eight different churches. He was first stationed in Saldanha Bay after which having married Deidre they moved to Mobray Cape Town. Then followed stations at Beaufort West, Umbilo Durban, Amanzimtoti, Kingwilliamstown, Scottburgh, and finally Dundee.

His commitment to learning continued throughout his life: he completed an honours degree in theology in 1982, a master's degree in 2012, and in 2019, at the age of 80, he graduated with a doctorate in theology at UKZN. As Ossie had grappled with the pastoral and theological issues associated with different perspectives on baptism, so his doctoral thesis breaks new ground in this area.

Highlights of his tenure in the Methodist ministry included:

- He visited Robben Island for two years (1970-1971), where he regularly ministered to Nelson Mandela amongst the hundreds of other prisoners;
- He attended the World Conference on the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem (1974);
- He attended the Montreal Olympic Games in 1976 with an evangelistic group called Youth with a Mission;
- He functioned as a Bishop in the Methodist church for three years.

- He retired at 65 in 2004 but never stopped working.
- In 2009 he did locum work in the Lutheran Church.
- He continued to conduct church services to the end of his life.
- He was key to the formation of the Methcon movement within the MCSA, calling the Methodist people to be faithful to the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

He approached life with a vitality that was an inspiration to all. As an evangelical leader, a pastor, a student of Theology, and an encourager, he emphasised the importance of community and was always ready to lend a helping hand. His boisterous presence and his unwavering commitment to his principles will be greatly missed.

## Their Inseparable Love Story

It is impossible to speak of one without speaking of the other, for their lives were a beautiful, interwoven tapestry.

Their love story began at Rhodes University. They complemented each other perfectly: While Ossie was initially somewhat shy and self-conscious, Deidre was carefree and adventurous. Over time, no doubt spurred on by Deidre, Ossie became more gregarious. They navigated every challenge together, celebrated every joy together, and built a remarkable life founded on mutual respect, deep affection, and shared laughter. (Ossie could never resist a pun, some of them excruciatingly bad) Their home was a beacon of love and hospitality, the central meeting place for friends and family.

## Their Enduring Legacy

Deidre and Ossie may have left us physically, but their legacy lives on vibrantly in the lives they touched:

- The strength and unity of the family they raised.
- The bonds of friendship they fostered throughout their lives.
- Their kindness and generosity of spirit has resulted in an unbelievable outpouring of love, gratitude, and shared sympathy throughout South Africa and the world.

*Continues on page 15*

At the huge Memorial Service held in celebration of their lives, among the many tributes were those given by the six grandchildren indicating the godly legacy left within their immediate family as well as in the wider family of God. One of the grandsons mentioned how during a fierce thunderstorm Deidre had prayed that lightning would strike a tree next to the house and not the house itself. Sure enough: CR-A-A-A-A-CK, the lightning

struck the tree adjacent the house leaving the house intact. Needless to say, this left an indelible impression. "What manner of woman is this that even the lightning obeys her!?"

A few weeks before their passing, Deidre remarked that she was ready to meet the Lord: she was tired and unwell, and her eyesight had deteriorated such that she could no longer do her fine

needlework. However, she was concerned as to how Ossie would manage on his own. Well, it is entirely possible that someone who could command lightning to do her will, would have enough pull with the God of all creation to arrange that they would both pass through gates of splendour into His presence at the same time!

*"In life and in death they were not divided." 2 Samuel 1:23*

## RETURN TO ETHICAL AND MORAL LEADERSHIP NEEDED IN SOCIETY

— By *Bishop Dr William Leleki*  
(Chairperson, SACC Metro)



Leadership is about influencing change and transformation for the better.

Leaders must be flexible and willing to adjust their approach or modus operandi in response to the will and needs of the people. More often than not, communities place their hopes for a better life in their leaders. One of the primary responsibilities of leadership is to serve as custodians of resources on behalf of the people. Leaders are entrusted with what is, in effect, a blank cheque to act ethically and morally in the distribution of wealth and resources within their communities. Effective leadership is determined by the approach adopted in addressing the needs of those they serve.

From our experience in the Metro, there is a serious shortage of leaders who can provide clear direction and closely monitor performance in ways that respond meaningfully to the needs of the people. Residents willingly lend their support to leaders, yet they are often disappointed when decisions are made on their behalf without any genuine attempt to listen to their pain and suffering. Much is happening in our communities of which leaders appear unaware, even within their own constituencies. This is unethical.

We define ethical leadership as leadership motivated by the love of God and committed to ensuring that people do not lose their dignity.

In the Gospel of Mark, we read the story of the woman who touched Jesus' robe, and Jesus immediately recognised that power had gone out from him (Mark 5:30). Ethical leaders, likewise, must be both recipients and channels of moral and relational power.

Ethical leaders understand that actions speak louder than words. They must demonstrate a willingness to be guided even as they lead. It is a serious challenge to be led by a leaderless leader. God remains our ultimate leader so that our leadership may be aligned with God's will and purpose.

In their role as ethical leaders, leaders must be committed to upholding justice and fairness, and to ensuring that people are served with dignity and respect.

Good leaders adapt their leadership style to address the needs of the people they serve. Great leaders possess the gifts, talents, and skills to journey with the people of God and resist the temptation to become distant or aloof. The concerns of the people must become the serious concerns of their leaders.

One of the areas in which the people of the Metro are being failed is safety.

The high levels of crime should give leaders sleepless nights, compelling them to work tirelessly toward the eradication of crime and corruption in every ward. No leader can claim success while people are kidnapped, hijacked, raped, killed, or forced to live in fear in their homes and communities.

We are in urgent need of leaders who lead by example and know how to motivate and cultivate support from the broader community. It is not only politicians who are failing; every pastor is a leader in his or her own right. The church remains a vital moral voice in confronting corruption, crime, unemployment, and poverty in our country. When church leaders fail to speak out against corruption, silence can easily be interpreted as complicity. We cannot afford a church that withdraws into a corner while social ills devastate the people of God.

We give thanks for the unity in action demonstrated by church leadership in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro.

Ethical Christian leadership, unlike other forms of leadership, is grounded in moral and spiritual values. Our integrity is often tested, especially in matters of money and resources. Scripture reminds us that whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much (Luke 16:10). God calls us to handle all resources entrusted to us with integrity.

Those who are given the opportunity to lead must embody the highest levels of integrity, character, and servant-heartedness. Leadership is about serving the people. Self-protective leadership stands in direct contrast to ethical leadership, as it prioritises self-interest, status, and complacency. Ethical leadership flows from one's deepest convictions, is shaped by positive attitudes, and is expressed through practical, transformative action.

The Apostle Peter outlines several characteristics of good leadership within the church and community. Leaders must focus on the needs of God's people rather than their own. They should lead out of eagerness to serve, not out of obligation. They must be concerned with what they can give, not what they can gain. They lead by example, not by force (1 Peter 5:2). Our leadership must align with these biblical principles.

At present, many leaders appear to lack the capacity, commitment, and political will necessary to transform our communities for the better. The people of the Metro need—and deserve—change.

# SECURING THE FUTURE: A Landmark Gathering at the 2026 Molopo District Children’s Ministry Indaba

The atmosphere in the Molopo District was electric, charged with a singular and holy purpose: “Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry Enhancing Children’s Lives in the Church.” This was not just another meeting, it was a defining moment for the District’s future.

The Methodist Children’s Unit (MCYU) recognised that to truly invite and more importantly, retain children in the life of the Church, the foundation must be built on trust, safety, and excellence.

## The Guardians of Our Mission

To bring this vision to life, the MCYU made a visionary decision by inviting two key leaders to guide the Indaba. We were deeply honoured to welcome Mnakile Zwane from the Connexional Mission Unit’s Child Care Desk and the District Secretary, Mr. A. Tlaletsi.

Zwane’s presence brought a profound sense of urgency and clarity. She did not merely speak about rules, she spoke about the sacred duty of care. Her sessions on vetting and screening served as a wake-up call, reminding every leader that safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of a child is one of the highest forms of ministry.

## Beyond the Paperwork: Policies with Purpose

With the expertise of Mr A. Tlaletsi, alongside her, the Indaba

explored the “nuts and bolts” of modern ministry. From safeguarding policies to indemnities and compliance, the message was clear: a church that is repositioned is a church that is prepared. The presenters navigated the complexities of legal requirements with insight and grace, ensuring that every local Circuit leader left not only with a manual, but with a renewed sense of mission.

They emphasised that: Vetting is an act of love; Compliance is a shield for the vulnerable; Safeguarding creates a space where children feel truly at home.

## A Heartfelt ‘Thank You’ to MCYU

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Methodist Children’s Unit (MCYU) for their foresight in organising this Indaba and for securing such high-calibre facilitators. By bringing Zwane and Tlaletsi to the Molopo District, the MCYU has empowered us to do more than simply “watch over” our children—we are now equipped to champion them.

As we move forward, we are no longer just a department; we are a movement. We are relocated in our thinking and repositioned in our actions, ensuring that the light of the Church shines brightest for those who need it most—our children.



# IMPORTANT DATES IN MARCH

March	04	Structures Committee Meeting	Virtual
March	05	Revisions Committee Meeting	Virtual
March	05	Church Unity Commission Central Committee Meeting	
March	05	Connexional Children and Youth Entities Consultation	Virtual
March	06	Boundaries Conversation: Formation of New Districts	Aliwal North
March	06-08	Music Association, Connexional General EXCO Meeting	Central District
March	08	International Women's Day: 50 Years of Ordaining Women in Ministry Programme Launch	Virtual
March	09-11	District Secretaries' Training	MCO
March	10	Connexional Gender Justice Task Team	Virtual
March	11-13	Bishops' Meetings	TBA
March	14-15	Order of Evangelism Convocation and Commission Service	All Districts
March	15-19	Africa Methodist Council Church Leaders Consultation on Migration	Ethiopia
March	17	Connexional Chaplaincy Committee Meeting	Virtual
March	17-22	Africa Methodist Council Youth Movement Youth Conference	
March	18	Methodist Publishing Standing Committee	Virtual
March	18-21	District Mission and Ecumenical Affairs Coordinators' Consultation	eMseni
March	18-22	Africa Methodist Council Women's Movement	TBA
March	19	Tsietsi Mashinini Bursary Fund Consultation	Virtual
March	19-22	Young Women's Manyano Connexional Extended Meeting	Central District
March	20	Boundaries Conversation: Formation of New Districts	Mpumalanga
March	25	District Treasurers' Consultation	Virtual
March	26	SMMS Board Meeting	Virtual
March	29 Mar – 05 Apr	Holy Week	

## REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

Lent	Liturgical Colour: Purple
<b>Lent 3A – 08 March, 2026</b> Exodus 17:1-7 – Psalm 95 – Romans 5:1-11 – John 4:5-42	
<b>Lent 4A – 15 March, 2026</b> 1 Samuel 16:1-13 – Psalm 23 – Ephesians 5:8-14 – John 9:1-41	
<b>Lent 5A – 22 March, 2026</b> Ezekiel 37:1-14 – Psalm 130 – Romans 8:6-11 – John 11:1-45	
<b>Liturgy of the Palms A – 29 March, 2026</b> Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 – Matthew 21:1-11 <i>OR Liturgy of the Passion A</i> Isaiah 50:4-9a – Psalm 31:9-16 – Philippians 2:5-11 – Matthew 26:14-27:66 OR Matthew 27:11-54	
<b>Good Friday A – 03 April 2026</b> Isaiah 52:12-53:12 – Psalm 22 – Hebrews 10:16-25 OR Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 – John 18:1-19:42	
<b>Easter Sunday A – 05 April 2026</b> Acts 10:34-43 OR Jeremiah 31:1-6 – Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 – Colossians 3:1-4 OR Acts 10:34-43 – John 20:1-18 OR Matthew 28:1-10	