



The Methodist Church
of Southern Africa

Another Dimension

APRIL 2026



IYAHAMBEKA LENDLELA: Honouring a Trailblazer in this Jubilee Year

As part of the Jubilee commemoration marking 50 years of women in ministry in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, visited the first black woman to be ordained in the MCSA, Rev. Nikiwe Mavis Mbilini.

During the visit, the Presiding Bishop expressed deep gratitude to Rev. Mbilini for her courage and resilience as a trailblazer in a time of profound difficulty, both within the Church and in the broader South African context. She acknowledged the pioneering role played by Rev. Mbilini and other early women clergy, whose sacrifices and determination helped pave the way for future generations of women ministers—including her own.

Rev. Mbilini, who was ordained in 1985 at the Conference held in Bloemfontein under the presidency of Rev. Ernest Baartman, reflected on the emotional significance of the visit from the Church's second female Presiding Bishop. Speaking from her home in Cofimvaba, she shared the weight of the challenges she faced in her early ministry.



Rev. Nikiwe Mavis Mbilini

"Seeing you here touches me deeply," she said. "There is so much I went through in those early years that I could not even speak about to my family. At times, it was so severe that one might have thought I had committed a grave wrong."

Continues on page 2

Special Points of Interest:

- Voices at The Cross (p. 3)
- From Performance to Proof (p. 4)
- Building Transformative Student Ministry (p. 6 & 7)
- Unveiling of The 95th Anniversary Stone (p. 8)
- Sanibonani (p. 9)
- SACC Condemns Desecration of Statue of Jesus Christ in Lebanon (p. 10)
- A Lament for Those Who Sleep Through The Wounds of The World (p. 11)
- Rev. Charmaine Morgan (p. 12)
- Rebuilding More Than A Church (p. 13)
- Empowering The Education System to Create an Empowered Community (p. 14)

Another Dimension

EDITOR / COMMUNICATIONS UNIT
Bonginkosi Moyo-Bango
bongi@mco.org.za

PHOTOGRAPHS
Supplied

DESIGNER
Jenine Pretorius
jenine@quirkysloth.com

ADVERTISING
bongi@mco.org.za
011 615 1616



The Methodist Church
of Southern Africa

www.methodist.org.za
Find us on [Facebook](#)
Follow us on [Twitter](#)
Watch us on [YouTube](#)

Photo credits

All photographs copyright the contributors unless otherwise stated.

Published by the
Communications Unit.
© The Methodist Church of
Southern Africa.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except for articles and photographs downloaded for local church use that are fully acknowledged. All rights reserved.



She revealed that, at one point, she even considered forgetting about ministry in the MCSA to become a Catholic nun. Yet, despite these hardships, her faith and call remained steadfast.


“This journey of ministry is possible because we do not walk it alone—God is in control of everything,” she reflected. “God opened doors for me when many had vowed to close them.”

Offering words of encouragement to women in ministry and beyond on this 50 year anniversary, Rev. Mbilini affirmed: “Iyahambeka lendlela—we can thrive on this journey of ministry. Never give up. Do not be tempted to turn back, no matter how difficult it becomes. The harvest is plentiful, and there is much work to be done. There are many waiting to be reached through your ministry. Your gifting may lead to innumerable challenges but challenges draw us closer to God, and we are told to give thanks in all things...”

The visit ended with the Presiding Bishop extending an invitation to Rev. Mbilini for her to attend the physical commemoration gathering scheduled for the last quarter of 2026.

Rev. Mbilini’s story stands as a powerful reminder of perseverance, faith, and the enduring call to serve at a time when we celebrate that God continues to call both women and men to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The Presiding Bishop was accompanied by the Circuit Superintendent, Rev. Lofafa, his wife, Circuit Stewards, and Bible Women.




SETH MOKITIMI METHODIST SEMINARY NPC
Forming Transforming Leaders for Church and Nation


On behalf of the SMMS Board, Dr Rowanne Marie,
the President of Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary,
cordially invites you to our

**15TH ANNUAL
PETER STOREY LECTURE**

**FRIDAY, 8TH MAY
2026 AT 17H00**

**OUR SPEAKER:
DR PHUMZILE
DANDALA**



Please join us via live stream:
 [LIVE https://www.facebook.com/sethmokitimimethodistseminary1/](https://www.facebook.com/sethmokitimimethodistseminary1/)

Enquiries: Mrs Sandra Knoop, Sandra@smms.ac.za Tel: 033 846 8600

The SMMS (NPC) is an accredited PHEI, registered with the DHET under the Higher Education Act (Act No.101 of 1997), Reg No: 2010/HE08/002

VOICES AT THE CROSS: Women Proclaiming The Word

2026 marks a sacred and historic milestone in the life of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa—fifty years since the ordination of women to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. This Jubilee year is both a celebration and a remembrance: honouring the courage of those who first broke barriers, and giving thanks for the generations of women who have faithfully carried the call to preach, lead, and serve.

As part of these Jubilee commemorations, a profound moment unfolded on Good Friday in the IDutywa Circuit. In a powerful witness to this legacy, an all-women panel of preachers—led by the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande who proclaimed the Via Dolorosa to a congregation of over 2,500. Together with seven other preachers who gave voice to the Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross, they embodied both the depth of the Gospel and the enduring presence of women in the pulpit.

These images capture more than a service; they tell a story of calling, resilience, and transformation. They stand as a testament to how far the Church has journeyed, and as an invitation to continue nurturing, affirming, and expanding the leadership of women in ministry for generations to come. Their sermons are available on Youtube – The Methodist Church of Southern Africa Connexion.



Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande



First Word – Mama Jonas



Second Word – Mama Malashe



Third Word – Mama Luke – Ndesi



Fourth Word – Rev. Kgomongwe



Fifth Word – Sis N. Tofu



Sixth Word – Sis N. Sikotoyi



Seventh Word – Mama Z. Gqoloqa

FROM PERFORMANCE TO PROOF: A Call Back to Authentic Faith

It was not just a dinner it was a moment of remembrance and awakening.

The room carried honour as we celebrated men who had walked with God for over 40 years. Not perfect men, but faithful ones. The kind whose lives quietly preach that walking with Christ leaves a mark time cannot erase.

The Rev. Nyobole, the guest speaker, stood and took us back to where it all began.

He spoke of John Wesley and Charles Wesley. Men once mocked and called “sons of Wesley.”

What was meant to belittle them became their identity: Amadodana aseWesile: the sons of Wesley.

Not just a name... a calling.

They believed in Christ fully. They preached Jesus boldly. They called for repentance without compromise.

And their faith had results.

Not noise.
Not performance.
Results.

He paused, and the tone shifted.

“Today,” he said, “preaching is becoming acting.”

A heavy truth settled in the room. People are no longer moved by the message but by the performance of the messenger. The pulpit risks becoming a stage.

But the Amadodana of old were different.

To them, salvation was everything. They were willing to suffer for it. To die for it. Their lives were the sermons, and their witness carried undeniable power.

Like Peter the Apostle, when they said they knew Jesus, even the crowd could see it. No introduction was needed. No performance required. Evidence spoke.

And then came the question that lingered:

Do people see Jesus in us?

Because we are not called to entertain. We are called to transform lives... and generations. He reminded us: They disciplined.

They corrected one another. They lived accountable lives.

Their spirituality was not hidden. It was seen in how they prayed, how they lived, how they loved truth.

But now?

Discipleship is fading. Accountability is quiet. The Church risks losing its depth while gaining applause.

Then came the call—clear and urgent:

Go back.
Back to prayer.
Back to obedience.
Back to the basics of faith.

Walk with discernment. Learn to hear God again—not the noise, not the crowd—God.

Because we are not just a movement.

We are witnesses.

Witnesses whose lives must speak when our mouths are silent. Witnesses whose faith must produce evidence.

He left us with a charge that did not feel optional:

Let people see Jesus when they look at you.
Let your faith produce visible fruit.
Let your life preach louder than your voice.

Because in the end
The world is not waiting for another performance... it is waiting for proof.



CHILDREN OF THE COMMUNITY REBUILD SIZINI SOCIETY CHURCH

In a powerful testament to faith, unity, and love, the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, joyfully blessed and dedicated the newly rebuilt Sizini Society in the Duytwa Circuit 330, under the leadership of Superintendent Rev. Lubabalo Quluba.

Once a derelict and unsafe structure, the church stood as a looming danger to the community. But in an extraordinary act of devotion, the children of the community—now scattered and working across the country, Samkele Ezenkosi Sijadu, Nwabisa Sijadu, Zikho Sijadu, Okuma Majavu, Athi Majavu, Sinazo Dyasi—rose to the occasion. United by a shared vision and deep gratitude for their spiritual home, they pooled their resources, each contributing what they could, to rebuild a sanctuary for their parents and future generations.

From different provinces and walks of life, their collective sacrifice and commitment gave birth to a place of worship, hope, and renewal. Today, this beautiful church stands not only as a building, but as a symbol of faith in action,

intergenerational love, and the enduring strength of community.

With hearts full of thanksgiving, the completed structure was handed over to the Church and the wider community—to the glory of God.



RELOCATED AND REPOSITIONED FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY – THE OTHER SIDE AWAITS

— *By Vuyokazi Mdingi*

In this season of discernment and faithful movement, Buffalo City Central Mission (BCCM) Circuit 313 continues to seek ways to relocate and reposition its mission and ministry so as to walk alongside unemployed young people with compassion and hope.

Under the leadership of Rev. Dr Zabeko, the Circuit launched a Skills Development IT Learnership Programme on 1 April 2026, responding prayerfully to the realities of youth unemployment and digital exclusion. Working in partnership with a fully accredited training and implementation organisation, the church is able to support unemployed youth in accessing recognised IT qualifications and meaningful workplace exposure, while remaining faithful to its calling.

Hosted at Victoria Methodist Church and serving young people from kuGompo City and surrounding communities, the programme speaks to lives being renewed with confidence, dignity, and purpose. The impact reaches beyond the learners themselves, with local employment opportunities also created within the project, strengthening households and the wider community.

As the church continues to listen, discern, and respond in faith, this ministry offers a quiet yet hopeful sign of God's work unfolding, reminding us that when we journey together, the other side awaits.

"Your limits are not final. God's strength empowers you to overcome."

— Philippians 4:13



BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE STUDENT MINISTRY: MCYU Engagement at the University of Free State – Qwaqwa Campus

On Thursday, 23 April 2026, the Methodist Children and Youth Unit (MCYU) Director Rev. Phezile Koekoe, Br. Thabo Mosea, Northern Free State and Lesotho District MCYU Co-ordinator, and the District MCYU Committee met with the Qwaqwa Circuit Leadership, led by Rev. Maine, the Superintendent Minister, Circuit stewards, the MCYU Circuit Committee, and the Methodist Students Society (Methsoc) members of the University of Free State – Qwaqwa Campus.

Methsoc has recently been relaunched on the campus, the last branch having been active before the COVID-19 lockdown. After that period, it was difficult to regroup again. This year the Circuit has taken a bold initiative towards reviving the Methodist Students Society at University of Free State – Qwaqwa campus which is under their pastoral oversight.

The Circuit offers spiritual accompaniment and pastoral support to students. On campus, the students engage in activities that strengthen and expand the Methodist Students Society on Campus.

The Connexional MCYU warmly welcomed the commitment of the Circuit and their efforts to provide support to students.

Rev. Koekoe, the MCYU Director, spoke about the

importance of well-planned and structured students' ministry, so that they can have meaningful output. The MCYU Director shared with the Circuit some of the programmes to add to their efforts to strengthen their ministry to students:

- Ready to Help Campaign
- Discipleship Programmes like Bible Studies, Baptisms, Soul Seeking and Winning programmes on Campus, Confirmation Classes, and Public Advocacy
- Student Food Banks Programmes
- Student Food Relief Programmes
- Tsietsi Mashinini Bursary Fund

The Connexional Office handed over food packages to the Circuit, to support the launch of the Food Bank.

The Circuit warmly welcomed the generous gifts of groceries, which were food hampers for ten students who are self-funded. Furthermore, the Circuit committed to mobilise more members of the Circuit to give towards the Food Banks. The Circuit shared their desire to extend their oversight to TVET College students within their Circuit.

If you know a student studying at University of Free State – Qwaqwa Campus seeking a spiritual home away from home, please tell them we have a vibrant and dynamic Methodist Students Society on the Campus.



MCSA YOUTH CHOIR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ECUMENICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL



The MCSA Youth Choir gathered at O. R. Tambo International Airport on 26 April, preparing to depart for Germany to participate in the Ecumenical Music Festival. The young people were visibly elated, embracing what many described as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

They were eager to represent the continent with pride, sharing the richness of our musical heritage on an

international stage. This initiative forms part of a broader effort to strengthen relationships between the Global North and Global South, using music as a bridge of connection.

Through this journey, the Methodist Church extends its witness beyond its own community, harnessing choral music as a powerful vehicle for cultural exchange, mutual understanding, and unity.

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE STUDENT MINISTRY: MCYU Engagement at the Central University of Technology – Welkom Campus

On Friday, 24 April 2026, the Methodist Children and Youth Unit (MCYU) Director Rev. Phezile Koekoe, Br. Thabo Mosea, Northern Free State and Lesotho District MCYU Co-ordinator, and the District MCYU Committee met with the Circuit Leadership of Welkom Circuit, which was led by Rev. Mutle, Rev. Mazwi, Circuit Stewards, MCYU Circuit Committee, and Methodist Students Society members of the Central University of Technology – Welkom Campus, Prof. Alfred Motalenyane Modise, a renowned scholar and community leader, who is the Accounting, Economics, and Business studies lecturer at CUT Welkom Campus, and staunch member of MCSA, who fully supports the continued existence of the Methodist Students Society on the Campus. Mme Lekutu (Assistant Res Manager), Mme Pule (Students Affairs), Zethu Madolo (Health and Welfare Officer), and Vuyiswa Van Nek (Students Affairs officer) represented the SRC.

Central University of Technology – Methodist Students Society at Welkom, under the capable leadership of Lungisani Zidane, is very vibrant and dynamic with over 50 students who continuously participate in creative and

innovative programmes on campus, with a focus on deepening the spirituality of students and engaging on issues of social advocacy and students' support.

Through the multi stakeholder engagement from SRC, Students' Affairs, Students' Accommodation, Prof Modise, the significant presence and participation of MethSsoc on the campus was highlighted as one of the organised structures that contributes to the mutual support and collaboration to students' development. It was highlighted by the University Students' Affairs that students are faced with multiple challenges, which threaten their academic performance. They expressed the need for more psychosocial and pastoral intervention from the Church.

It was evident that the presence of MethSsoc is beneficial to the holistic growth and development of students—their programmes are relational, relevant to the students' context.

Welkom Circuit has a strong relationship with the University, as they continue to offer consistent pastoral care, support, and spiritual guidance to students.



EASTER CONVENTION 2026 HELD AT KEATS DRIFT SOCIETY: Community Outreach

A community outreach initiative was conducted in Keats Drift to support both learners and elderly members of the community. The aim of the initiative was to provide essential resources and improve the well-being of beneficiaries.

Distribution of School Shoes

A total of 51 pairs of school shoes were distributed to learners at Keats Drift Primary School. The donation aimed to assist learners in need, ensuring that they attend school with dignity and confidence.

Distribution of Roller Tanks to the Elderly

A total of 12 roller water tanks were distributed to elderly beneficiaries from Msinga. These tanks will assist in easing the burden of fetching water and improve their daily living conditions.

9 wheelchairs were given to people who are living with disability from the Msinga community.

Conclusion

The outreach programme was successful and made a meaningful impact on the community. Continued

initiatives are encouraged to further support vulnerable groups.

Impact of the Initiative

- Improved dignity and confidence among learners
- Enhanced access to essential resources
- Reduced physical strain on elderly beneficiaries
- Strengthened community support
- People who benefited from the outreach are not from the Methodist Church only, but also from the Msinga Community



UNVEILING OF THE 95TH ANNIVERSARY STONE— “Rev. A.M. Mbete Wall of Fame”

The unveiling of the 95th Anniversary Stone— “Rev. A.M. Mbete Wall of Fame” was not merely a ceremonial act, but a sacred moment where history, memory, and legacy stood still to be honored.

Unveiled by the Kumkani Hintsa District Bishop, Rev. N.P. Sibidla, the stone rises as a testimony carved not only in rock, but in the faithfulness of generations. It carries the names of Young Men’s Guild members who have walked a journey of over 40 years in the organisation—men who did not merely belong, but endured, served, and shaped.

Each name engraved is a story. A story

of commitment through changing times. A story of men who carried the mission of Christ when it was easy, and more importantly, when it was not. These are living witnesses that faith is not proven in moments, but in consistency across decades.

Naming the Wall of Fame after Rev. A.M. Mbete anchors this monument in deeper historical significance. It is an acknowledgment of a servant whose life and ministry left an imprint strong enough to outlive his days as a shepherd whose influence continues to echo through the lives of those who follow. His name now stands as a gateway to remembrance,

linking past leadership with present honour and future inspiration.

This stone, therefore, is not just about looking back, it is a bridge between generations. It calls the present to rise, to serve with the same endurance, and to trust God even in uncharted territory. It reminds all who stand before it that legacy is not built overnight, but through years of quiet obedience, sacrifice, and unwavering faith.

In that unveiling moment, the past was not buried—it was revealed, celebrated, and entrusted to the future.



MATLOSANA CIRCUIT WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP HOST ANNUAL CAREER EXPO

— *By Maggie Rakumakoue*

The Women’s Fellowship is a mission-driven organisation committed to serving the holistic needs of the needy and vulnerable. Our mission is to address spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and economic needs through the implementation of educational skills, development programmes, and the promotion of social justice.

In line with the organisation’s objective of planning and implementing educational programmes, the Women’s Fellowship organises an annual Career Guidance Expo aimed at assisting learners in Grades 10 to 12 to make informed and appropriate career choices. This initiative recognises the critical stage at which learners must select subjects and career pathways that will shape their future education and employment opportunities. This year’s Expo was attended by more than 300 learners with the support of educators from various schools.

The Career Guidance Expo has become a yearly event where various key stakeholders are invited to provide learners with accurate information and guidance on career selection, subject requirements, and post-school



opportunities. Core stakeholders include representatives from the Department of Education (Examinations Section), NSFAS, and SETA, who play a vital role in informing learners about examinations, funding opportunities, and skills development pathways.

In 2026, the Expo was expanded to include representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Horticulture, Emergency Medical Rescue Services, the Mining sector, and FNB representing the banking and financial services sector. These additions were made to expose learners to a broader range of career opportunities and industries that are relevant to both local and national economic development.



Furthermore, young graduates are invited to share their personal experiences and success stories, with the aim of motivating and encouraging learners to become eager to learn, remain focused, and pursue their career goals with confidence and determination.

SANIBONANI: Who is The Antichrist of Our Age?

—By Rev. Mike Vorster



When I was a teenager and newly committed to the Jesus way in 1974, there was great excitement and intrigue about the last days—especially the advent of the Antichrist. We spoke much about this, sometimes with a macabre sense of attraction to the thought of living in the end times. Every conservative and evangelical Christian went to watch films by David Wilkinson and read his book about the future of humanity in his book 'The Vision'. The father of the 20th century apocalyptic end times peddler was of course Hal Lindsay, 'The Late Great Planet Earth'. To date, he has sold 20 million books.

Even secular sociologists using their analytical tools examined the present and what the future may behold. This was mediated in the main by Alvin Toffler's book and documentary 'Future Shock'. This did the rounds in some academic circles. At University we were introduced to this documentary by our New Testament Lecturer, with the purpose of analysis—theorising linked with reflective theologising.

As I grew more mature in the faith, I began to raise questions about when Jesus will come again. Then one of our Methodist Local Preachers, who was the gentlest person with empathetic wisdom, said to me that Jesus comes to us every day. Of course, this for me made perfect sense. A reading of Matthew 7 and Matthew 25—especially the parable of the sheep and goats—verified this doctrine. "Listen carefully, for when you have done this to least of them you have done this to me." Wow. Does Jesus not come to us daily through the face of the hungry and those in prisons, etc?

A prominent evangelical preacher was once asked, "What would you do if you knew Jesus was coming tomorrow?" "What day is it?" "Saturday." He said, "I will get out of bed, get dressed, and mow the lawn."

Let us read Matthew 25

"Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was

sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'" I would suggest you read the whole passage and read Matthew 7 as well. What does this tell us?

Each age, epoch, or generation has had a global leader whose job description qualifies them to be an Anti-Christ.

Firstly, evil comes as light to deceive even God's elect.

Matthew 24:24

"For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

Scripture only uses the concept Anti-Christ in 1 John 4:3, "But every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world."

In "The Patristical Idea of Antichrist," a series of lectures given in 1838, John Henry Newman tried to imagine what sort of people would be willing to accept the rule of antichrist. Newman envisions a society "built on mere principles of utility," one in which "expedience, and not truth" become "the end and the rule of measures of State," with mobbish enthusiasm as the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong ("as if we had any reason," he scoffs, "for thinking that the many will be in the right, and the few in the wrong"). By [Matthew Walther](#).

Much more could be said about the antichrist, however if one is so obsessed with who and what this person would look like, one may be diverted from the calling of Jesus in the now. According to some scholars this could also mean a collective of deceivers—as systemic oppression of thoughts, ideas, and dissenters, where truth is called fake and fake is called truth.

After a church service at a retirement village, one elderly woman accompanied me to my vehicle and engaged me with conversation about an evangelist that she listened to on radio who spoke about the end times. As I listened, some red flags began to appear. She was so convinced that they were speaking the biblical truth. But all I could discern is that they had a cultish hold on her. She seemed to indicate that they had the ultimate truth. I pointed out to her that Jesus comes to us every day and pointed to Matthew 25. However, I might as well have been speaking to a glazed-eyed cyborg. It was as though she could not hear what I was proposing, beyond the mist and cloud of what this evangelist was 'teaching'. The antichrist will be on everyone's mind even if you adore him or not (it seems that the idea of an antichrist is masculine) There are many others who are also captured by false messiahs and false prophets.

In a BBC Podcast titled 'The Rapture', host Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the ideas developed by the Anglican priest John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), drawn from this reading of scripture, in which Jesus would suddenly take His believers up into the air, and those left behind would suffer on earth until He returned with His church to rule for a thousand years before Final Judgement. Some believers would look for signs that civilisation was declining, such as wars and natural disasters, or for the new Roman Empires that would harbour the antichrist, and from these predict the time of the Rapture. Darby helped establish the Plymouth Brethren, and later ideas were picked up in the Scofield Reference Bible (1909) and soon became influential, particularly in the USA.

Question, where is the new Roman Empire in the 21st century? Who is the antichrist that this 21st century empire harbours?

Darby has been credited with originating the [pretribulational rapture theory](#).

Continues on page 10

Dispensationalist beliefs about the fate of the Jews and the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Israel put dispensationalists at the forefront of [Christian Zionism](#). (Wikipedia)

It would seem that the origins of the end-timers began with an Irish Anglican priest and side-lined theologian in the 19th century, John Nelson Darby. Since then, there have been many hardcore disciples of his. In my opinion, those who follow the spirit of predicting and reading the signs of the times could be called Darbyites. He is also the progenitor of Christian Zionism, which in the 21st century is a toned-down version of ISIS—similar but different. Both want a form of theocracy, even if getting there is through force and the massacre of hundreds of people. Both also place women in subordinate roles. Democracy out, theocracy in—where human rights and justice for all will evaporate into the stars above. Theocracy will not hesitate to use might and power to subjugate all of humanity because they have bigger guns or are more ruthless than others. All this will be done in the name of God, even Jesus' name is invoked. The Byzantium empire is one of the earlier examples of theocratic rule where converts were made at the end of a sword.

What is a Theocracy?

Theocracy is a form of government in which a deity is recognised as the supreme civil ruler, and religious leaders typically govern in the name of that deity.

Theocracy, government by divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided. In many theocracies, government leaders are members of the clergy, and the state's legal system is based on religious law. Theocratic rule was typical of early civilizations.

There are countries who are ruled by a variant form of theocracy or religious fervour:

The former apartheid government was a variant of theocracy driven by an extreme form of Calvinism, often named as Afrikaner Calvinism. This is why the World Alliance of Reformed Churches advocated that [apartheid was a heresy](#).

There are currently some political parties who will rule the country based on theocracy.

“Don't trust every spirit but test the spirits to discover whether they come from God or not. For the world is full of false prophets. Determine if they are from the antichrist which you were warned is already in the world.” 1 John 4:1, 3

“One test is to determine if the spiritual movement reflects Jesus' teachings of humility, love, forgiveness and care for the poor, while emphasizing peaceful resolution of conflicts. Or do you hear statements such as political leaders are anointed by God, holy war, and winning a spiritual battle against the evil culture. Beware of the latter.” Dr. Mary Theresa Webb.

Be awake and discerning:

“Wherefore he saith, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Ephesians 5:14-21 (King James Version)

Read also John Wesley's Sermon Three where he unpacks those who 'sleepest'. Some google reading: [What do we know about the Antichrist?](#)

SACC CONDEMNS DESECRATION OF STATUE OF JESUS CHRIST IN LEBANON

— *From The Office of Rev. Mzwandile Molo, General Secretary*



The South African Council of Churches (SACC) condemns the deplorable act of the desecration of a Jesus Christ statue by an Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) soldier in Lebanon as widely reported. This act, carried out in the context of war, represents an intentional violation of the dignity of people who follow the Christian faith in Lebanon and across the world, for whom Jesus Christ is the Saviour and cornerstone of their faith.

As the SACC we are convinced that this act is born out of a culture of impunity that the State of Israel has enjoyed in the world with the shielding of powerful states, especially the United States of America (USA). The powerful global media is also complicit in refusing to expose the truth in that part of the world. It is without doubt that the rhetoric and praxis of war built on the dehumanisation of many in the Middle East inevitably leads to such despicable acts.

This is a moment of reflection for many in the Christian community who have given their unquestioning support to the State of Israel with the mistaken belief that the current State of Israel is the biblical Israel, which is not true. This is a natural result of utterances about the nature and character of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ's witness by Benjamin Netanyahu who recently said, “History proves that, unfortunately and unhappily, Jesus Christ has no advantage over Genghis Khan.”

Behind this desecration of the statue of Jesus Christ lies the ugly truth of the persecution and dehumanisation of Christians and many others in Palestine, Syria, and now Lebanon. We note the promise to investigate the incident and hold accountable the perpetrators.

We call on the leadership of the State of Israel to turn away from the rhetoric and practice of war, which dehumanises and displaces millions, and to commit to a just peace where neighbours can live in dignity and mutual respect. We stand in solidarity with the Christians and all people who are persecuted in the Middle East, as we continue to pray for the end of all wars.

A LAMENT FOR THOSE WHO SLEEP THROUGH THE WOUNDS OF THE WORLD

— By Rev. Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu

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



I offer this lament to all who carry inherited pain, to all who refuse forgetfulness, and to all who long for a world shaped by justice, truth, and repair.

I come before You, O God—Who-Remember, not always standing, not always strong, sometimes seated, sometimes lying down, sometimes held together only by breath and grace, but present. Present with the weight of centuries pressing against my ribs. Present with the mothers who buried children they were never allowed to name, with the fathers whose backs were turned into maps of another man's profit, with the ancestors who crossed oceans in chains, and those who crossed deserts in silence. Present with the ones whose stories were stolen and the ones whose bones still lie in unmarked graves. And I lament.

For there are those who say, "Why must you stay awake? Why must you keep watch?", as though sleep were innocence and forgetting were holy. As though the world were not built on the bruised bodies of the enslaved, as though colonialism were merely a chapter and not a wound that still bleeds through our institutions, our borders, our theologies, and our imaginations. I lament the ease with which some choose amnesia, the way they reach for resurrection without passing through Golgotha, the way they speak of reconciliation without truth, the way they dream of community without repair.

For how can we stay awake if we refuse to remember the bodies that were broken, the cultures that were plundered, the lives that were declared disposable by empires that baptised their violence and called it civilisation? Each wound is particular, each history its own universe of suffering, yet the logic that made them possible is tragically familiar. How can we stay awake if we do not hear the cries of the Middle, Passage echoing in detention centres, if we do not see the shadow of the plantation in the prison yard, if we do not recognise the logic of the Holocaust whenever a people is marked as threat, as burden, as less than human?

I lament the seduction of sleep, the sleep that numbs, the sleep that protects privilege, the sleep that whispers, "This is not your concern." But my ancestors rise in my bones and say, "Rangarira pawakabva, remember where you come from." For memory is moral. Memory is resistance. Memory is the first act of liberation.

And so, I remember. I remember the women who hid wisdom in their lullabies, the grandmothers who prayed with their feet, the prophets who refused to be silenced, the freedom fighters who carried hope like contraband. I remember the God who hears the cry of the oppressed before the oppressor hears the sound of his own footsteps. I remember the Christ who stayed awake in Gethsemane while his friends slept through the hour of revelation. I remember, and in remembering, I refuse to sleep.

For true wakefulness is costly. It demands that we see what others deny, that we name what others excuse, that we grieve what others dismiss, and that we hope in ways that unsettle the world. And so, I lament, not to drown in sorrow,

but to honour the truth. Not to rehearse despair, but to refuse the lie of innocence. Not to cling to wounds, but to insist that healing requires honesty, and that justice requires repair. And even those who sleep can be awakened, for grace does not abandon the slumbering but calls them into truth.

O God of the weary and the watchful, teach us to stay awake with the tenderness of those who have suffered, with the courage of those who have survived, and with the wisdom of those who know that resurrection is not escape but Your refusal to let the violated be forgotten. Teach us to stay awake until every body is honoured, every culture restored, every life cherished, and every community rebuilt on truth, justice, and repair.

And let it be known, not as a slogan, but as a moral clarity born of suffering and survival, that those who are awake to history, awake to injustice, awake to the wounds and the wisdom of the oppressed, can midwife a world where justice breathes freely. For people who are woke, in the deepest and oldest sense of the word, the sense our ancestors carried long before it was contested, can midwife the world that You long for, a world where memory is honoured, truth is spoken, and repair is not optional but holy.

For people who are woke can midwife a world where justice lives.

BOOK AVAILABLE

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

A Powerful Story of Faith, Calling, and Courage

The inspiring memoir of Rev. Dr. Purity Malinga, the first woman Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

A testimony of obedience, resilience, and advancing women's leadership in the church.

AVAILABLE NOW AT MCO

R200

GET YOUR COPY TODAY!

Contact Hloni Rantie for **collection only**
074 367 4357 | hloni@mco.org.za

REV. CHARMAINE MORGAN: First Woman General Secretary in The MCSA

— By Prof. Rev. Simangaliso Kumalo



“On the one hand, I think having female clergy in positions of leadership in Districts and the Connexion should be quite normal, and nothing exceptional.”¹

Rev. Charmaine Morgan was the first woman to be elected as General Secretary of the MCSA and first woman Bishop of the Namibia Synod.

She was born in Windhoek, Namibia. She is the eldest of three children. Her father came from the Eastern Cape, a descendant of the 1820 settlers from Britain. Moreover, her mother came from the North West province, where her grandfather was a farmer. Both her parents are of German and Dutch descent. At age 2, her family relocated from Windhoek to Pretoria, where she attended primary school, before her father was transferred to Pietersburg, now Polokwane, where she did her high schooling. She states that: “From there I studied Speech and Hearing Therapy at the University of Pretoria. I grew up in an ordinary working family, with close family bonds and Christian ethics.” Her father was Anglican and her mother Dutch Reformed, but they later decided to join the Methodist Church. Throughout her childhood, her father was an active church leader, as a Society Steward, Circuit Steward, and Society Treasurer. Her mother was a choir member and hard-working member of the Women’s Auxiliary. As a result, Rev. Morgan hardly ever missed a day in Sunday school at Valley Society in Pretoria, in the then Pietersburg Society, where she was confirmed by Rev. Kingsley Thomas. Looking back, she states: “As a young child, I am told I conducted funerals for dead birds, and stated my intention to become a Deaconess like Sister Mary Caley who served in our Circuit.” Although she does not remember this, it reflects her young interest in following the footsteps of exemplary people in her society. Her conversion took place at a Confirmation Camp at the age of 15. She then became a Sunday School teacher and church choir member in her teen years.

Having left school, she went to university where she joined the SCA as an active member. At the local Society (Brooklyn, Pretoria), she joined the Young Adults, Bible Study, became part of the post-SACLA movement, became a member of the Wesley Guild and served as Catering Secretary. After matriculating she obtained a Bachelor of Logopedics in 1992 (Speech and Hearing Therapy) at the University of Pretoria. Thereafter, she obtained a B.Th. Hons from UNISA. Upon reflection, she remembers: “Moving away to start work in Brakpan, I joined the Northfield Society, becoming part of the Young Adults’ Ministry. Here, the Minister (Rev Don Scrooby) ‘hounded’ me to get involved in the youth work (high school age) of the Society. Very reluctantly, I eventually agreed, and what I thought would be a complete failure, turned into a ministry I could never have foreseen. Within two years or so, I became the Coordinator of Youth Ministries in the Society,



became involved in Youth Synods, and eventually under the guidance of Rev. David Sadler, gave up my full-time position as a Therapist to work at the church. Here I did therapy 50% of the time, and gave the rest of my time to youth ministry, with no intention at all of candidating. The youth ministry thrived, and we had hundreds of teens every week.” It was her intention to work like this for a while, and then to find a full-time therapy position again. However, this did not materialise, as she found herself totally committed to church work on a full-time basis. She became convicted of a call to the ordained ministry, which she was encouraged in by the ministers in her local Society at the time, to which she responded by offering as a Candidate in 1988.

Despite the ill treatment suffered by women ministers in the MCSA Connexion, she mostly found herself in congregations where she was very well accepted. That being said, “I have experienced the phenomenon that people left the church because they heard that I was coming, but I have had very little overt resistance from members of the church to my ministry. From some Senior Ministers, and some church leaders, however, I have felt marginalised at times, feeling that my contribution was less valuable, being ignored when I made a valid point, and at times, by one or two Senior Clergy, being treated as if I was a naughty child.” Despite all this, as a person convicted by her call, she did not dwell on this very much, believing her call supersedes the discrimination of others, or their opinions. She also led as a Superintendent in a number of Circuits, as an “outside” Superintendent, superintending a Circuit she was not stationed in. She has also served as District Supervisor of Studies, District Secretary, and Vice-chair in different Districts. She notes that: “In all of these places I have found that my contribution has been welcomed, and my presence in these offices and other committees of the Church, I think, have helped to some extent to open doors for younger women and for a change in attitude.”

She specifically remembers one humbling experience while visiting a Circuit to preach as Vice Chair. She was the first woman to be allowed into the pulpit, which was affirmed through rejoicing and dancing from female congregants. This portrays the misinterpreted and highly patriarchal attitudes within the church, especially about the call and those who are allowed to preach or teach. To justify this gruesome act, Paul’s text on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 has been used to silence women and she is a recipient of that text being used against her. “The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

Continues on page 13

When Charmaine's term as General Secretary ended in 2019, she was appointed Bishop of the Namibia Synod. Thus, becoming the first woman Bishop of the Methodist Church in Namibia. The way Morgan has performed her duties, treated and related to the majority of ministers in the MCSA (most of whom are males) will determine the way in which women ministers will be viewed and considered for positions of power and leadership in the MCSA. The way she has treated and responded to challenges faced by black ministers, especially those who were vulnerable during her time of leadership, will determine the possibilities

of white ministers elected into positions of leadership and influence in a church that is dominated by black people. Unfortunately, her ascent to power has been a test of the level of acceptance of the leadership of minority groups in the MCSA, these being women, coloureds, and whites. She has either encouraged the majority of the Church to embrace the leadership of those who remain on the margins of leadership in the MCSA, or has shut doors for them because of the way she was perceived, judged, and welcomed.

REBUILDING MORE THAN A CHURCH: The Ntlabathi Family's Gift to Qoliwe Society

In a generous and deeply personal act of giving, Mr. T.V. Ntlabathi and his family have rebuilt the Qoliwe Society Church and handed it back to the Dutywa Circuit 330.

The original building had become small, unsafe, and no longer suitable for worship. As committed Methodists, the Ntlabathi family felt led—through prayer and reflection—to take responsibility for rebuilding the church so that the community could once again have a safe and dignified place to gather.

The new building was dedicated on Saturday, 4 April, by the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande. It was the second church she dedicated that day in the Dutywa Circuit 330, under the leadership of Superintendent Rev. Lubabalo Quluba in the Kumkani Hintsa District.

Speaking to the congregation, the Presiding Bishop reminded them not to forget to “bring the Ark of the Covenant” into the temple. She encouraged them to remember that, while the new building is important, it is the presence of God among the people that truly makes it a church.

The Ntlabathi family shared that their hope is for the church to be more than just a building—that it becomes a place of worship, growth, and support for the whole community.

Their gift is not only a new structure, but a renewed space for faith and community life in Qoliwe Society.




Above: Mr. T.V. Ntlabathi and his family at the church building blessing.



Above: Mr. Ntlabathi pictured here with the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande.




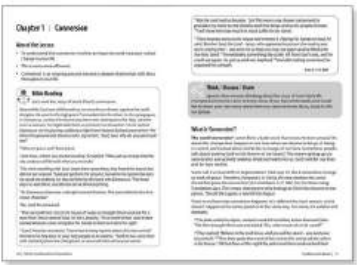


The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

MCSA Confirmation Preparation Guide

Developed by EMMU and approved by DEWCOM in 2024

The confirmation booklet for use in confirmation classes of the MCSA.

Available January 2025
from Booksite Afrika for bulk orders
or from your nearest MPH stockist.

Recommended Retail Price: **R799 (pack of 10)**
ISBN: 9781998987221

Specs
Size: 168x245mm
Pages: 80
Font size: 12pt
Format: Soft Cover
Shrinkwrapped packs of 10 units

Place your orders: khanya@cmpublishing.co.za, johanna@cmpublishing.co.za
or directly at Booksite: orders@booksite.co.za

EMPOWERING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM TO CREATE AN EMPOWERED COMMUNITY

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



The Bible is clear when it comes to teaching and highlights that teaching is not merely a profession but a calling to nurture, develop and guide young minds into responsible citizens contributing meaningfully to the economy. Teaching is a divine duty endowed by God to each teacher. A teacher's responsibility is not just important knowledge but also wisdom, moral values and patriotism (Romans 12:7 and 2 Timothy 5:7).

The focus should not be on how many people passed matric, but about transforming young people into a productive workforce.

Improving the education system in SA is not merely about increasing the number of those who pass matric. That just results in a bigger number of hopefuls swelling the ranks of the unemployed. When political leaders provide education to the people, they are not doing them a favour. The leaders are duty-bound to provide an empowering education system aimed at ensuring that unlocks each and every individual potential to contribute positively to economic growth. We should hold our leaders accountable and demand genuine education.

Drive through any of our townships and you will see that the Nelson Mandela Bay metro is experiencing a high rate of unemployed youth. The education system in this country seemingly does not prepare young people to become economically active. We do not see the youngsters leaving our schools having the skills required to secure work or study further. It seems that the system teaches young people for the sake of keeping them busy.

Education should be about creating a conducive classroom environment, where leaders invest in their people for a bright and better future.

Our leaders are not doing enough to ensure that children and young people are adequately educated to take charge of their lives and future.

The schools are poorly maintained, with insufficient teaching materials and overcrowded classrooms. Many of our schools lack basic facilities and a safe environment in a crime-free zone. Teachers remain the backbone of any education system and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Any genuine, future-looking education system invests a lot in teacher development. An equitable and empowering education system should not have two realities – private and public education. It should be one education system aimed at empowering all the citizens of the country to be responsible, productive and God-fearing people working together to improve the economy. The current system needs to be transformed.

Empowering education must move away from Western pedagogies that emphasise individualism and competition instead of a more collaborative and community-oriented approach that aligns with the contextual ways of learning.

Empowering God-centred education helps young minds to think freely, act ethically and lead with purpose. Any education system that ignores indigenous knowledge is an education that distances people from the fullness of their potential.

An education system which fails to talk to the context of the people rendered itself irrelevant. A relevant and empowering education system offers sustainable and solution-based skills to address the current social ills experienced by our communities.

An empowering education system helps citizens to see the importance of integrating the community-based knowledge into the curriculum, into skilling them to participate fully in the economic growth of their communities. For example, when you train police, you should train people to be community based rather than police station based.

All of us should promote an education system that helps teachers and pupils to contribute meaningfully to a curriculum that reflects local values and needs.

Local communities should be allowed to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process involving the kind of education system that they see relevant to their local context.

Matric results are not more important than shaping individuals to contribute meaningfully to economic growth. The schooling system must talk to economic growth for it to be on empowering education system.

An African critical thinking education system must be one that talks of technology, economic skills, creative thinking, problem-solving and independent thinking.

An empowering education system should base its steps on promoting indigenous languages, local knowledge, innovation and must equip young people to lead the world in addressing the challenges of the future.



IMPORTANT DATES IN MAY – MISSION MONTH

May	06	SMMS NPC AGM and Board Meeting	Virtual
May	07	Connexional Trust Property Committee	Virtual
May	08	Peter Storey Annual Lecture	Pietermaritzburg
May	08-10	Connexional MethSSoc Conference	KwaZulu-Natal Region
May	09	SMMS Graduation	Pietermaritzburg
May	13	Marsh Insurance Meeting	Virtual
May	13-18	Africa Methodist Council Heads of Conferences Summit	Togo
May	14	Ascension Day	
May	14-24	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	All Districts
May	17	Connexional Women's Fellowship Remembrance service	Virtual
May	20	MCSA Presbyters' District Convocation	William Kama / Namibia / NFSL / Natal Coastal / Natal West / Central / HESWA / Mozambique / Camdeboo / Molopo
May	21-23	MCSA District Synods	William Kama / Namibia / NFSL / Natal Coastal / Natal West / Central / HESWA / Mozambique / Camdeboo / Molopo
May	24	Pentecost Sunday	
May	27	MCSA Presbyters' District Convocations	COGH / Kumkani Hintsa / Mokala-Montle / Limpopo / Clarkebury / Uphondo Lwendlovu
May	28-30	MCSA District Synods	COGH / Kumkani Hintsa / Mokala-Montle / Limpopo / Clarkebury / Uphondo Lwendlovu

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

Easter	Liturgical Colour: Gold
<i>Easter 5A – 03 May, 2026</i> Acts 7:55-60 – Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 – 1 Peter 2:2-10 – John 14:1-14	
<i>Easter 6A – 10 May, 2026</i> Acts 17:22-31 – Psalm 66:8-20 – 1 Peter 3:13-22 – John 14:15-21	
<i>Ascension of the Lord A – 14 May, 2026</i> Acts 1:1-11 – Psalm 47 OR Psalm 93 – Ephesians 1:15-23 – Luke 24:44-53	
<i>Easter 7A – 17 May, 2026</i> Acts 1:6-14 – Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 – 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11 – John 17:1-11	
<i>Pentecost A – 24 May, 2026</i> Acts 2:1-21 OR Numbers 11:24-30 – Psalm 104:24-34, 35b – 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 OR Acts 2:1-21 – John 20:19-23 OR John 7:37-39	
Ordinary Time	Liturgical Colour: Green
<i>Trinity Sunday A – 31 May, 2026</i> Genesis 1:1-2:4a – Psalm 8 – 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 – Matthew 28:16-20	
<i>Proper 5A – 07 June, 2026</i> Genesis 12:1-9 OR Hosea 5:15-6:6 – Psalm 33:1-12 OR Psalm 50:7-15 – Romans 4:13-25 – Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26	