



The Methodist Church
of Southern Africa

Another Dimension

MARCH 2026



SHE SAID YES TO THE CALL!: MCSA Marks 50 Years of Women in Ministry with a Call to Reset

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) has launched its Women in Ministry (WIM) Jubilee Year, marking fifty years since the ordination of women into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Gathered at Mondeor Methodist Church in the Central District—a site deeply connected to the legacy of the first ordained woman, Rev. Constance Oosthuizen—the Church paused to celebrate, reflect, and confront its own unfinished journey toward justice.

Delivering the keynote address, Presiding Bishop Rev. Pumla Nzimande made it clear that this milestone is not simply a celebration of women, but a moment of accountability for the whole Church.

“This commemoration is not just women’s business, but a time for us to pause as a Church and take stock of where we have come from on issues of transformation.”

Fifty years after the historic ordination of women in 1976, the Church finds itself holding two realities in tension: celebration and lament. There is much to celebrate—the dismantling of exclusionary systems, the courage of

pioneering women, and the undeniable contribution of women clergy to the life of the Church and society. Yet, as Rev. Nzimande reminded the gathering, the journey is far from complete.

“Whilst we celebrate, we lament... we lament patriarchy, we lament gender-based violence and femicide, we lament the socio-economic conditions of women... and the slowness of transformation.”

Launched during the Lenten season and on International Women’s Day, the Jubilee carries a deeper spiritual significance. It is not merely a commemoration, but a call to repentance and renewal. Drawing on the biblical concept of Jubilee in Leviticus 25, Rev. Nzimande framed this moment as an opportunity for a radical reset—one that must move beyond symbolism to real transformation.

“May the focus and intentionality that we dedicate to justice and equality be a reset for the MCSA, so that the next fifty years of women in ministry become a better experience.”

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The theme for the year, “She Said Yes to the Call,” captures both the courage and the cost of women’s leadership.

Rev. Nzimande reflected on the many women who continue to say yes—to God, to leadership, and to purpose—often in spaces that remain resistant and exclusionary.

“In churches, in boardrooms, in schools, in politics, and business—she says yes to the call of God and takes the risk to swim against the tide.”

Turning to John 4, Rev. Nzimande drew powerful parallels between the Samaritan woman at the well and the experience of women in ministry today. In a context marked by division and exclusion, Jesus crosses boundaries of gender, ethnicity, and religion to engage a woman who had been marginalised and misjudged. That encounter, she noted, is not only transformative for the woman, but for her entire community.

“Christ sees women not as the world perceives them, but as vessels that can make a difference—and He calls us.”

Yet the story also exposes the enduring realities of exclusion. The Samaritan woman’s presence at the well at midday—outside the rhythms of communal life—signals isolation and social stigma. Rev. Nzimande challenged the Church to confront similar patterns in its own life, where women are often silenced, scrutinised, or reduced.

“There is something inherently wrong with systems... that are designed to favour males, and when things go wrong, that very system blames, shames, and isolates the woman.”

Despite this, the Samaritan woman becomes a bearer of good news, returning to her community to proclaim her encounter with Christ. For Rev. Nzimande, this moment is instructive: God continues to call and use those who have been overlooked, repositioning them for mission and ministry.

“When God relocates us for mission and ministry, He is not limited by social and religious constructs.”

The Jubilee also serves as a direct challenge to the Church’s leadership and culture. Rev. Nzimande warned against the subtle and overt ways in which individuals and structures act as gatekeepers, limiting access and participation.

“When you gatekeep, you become an obstacle to the salvation of the other side.”

Instead, she called for a Church that opens space rather than restricts it—one that prioritises the mission of God over institutional comfort and control.

As the Church reflects on fifty years of women in ministry, it must also confront a sobering reality: many women are weary.

“Women are tired of fighting for their God-endowed space... tired of fighting barriers and inequality, because Christ has already broken down those barriers.”

This Jubilee, then, is not a ceremonial milestone. It is a call to action. A call to move beyond lip service and into meaningful change. A call for allies—clergy and laity alike—to stand alongside women in the work of justice.

Rev. Nzimande closed with a reminder drawn from John Wesley, calling the Church back to its foundational ethos of love and unity:

“Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? ... If thy heart be right, give me thy hand.”

As the MCSA embarks on this Jubilee year, the invitation is clear: to build a Church that reflects the radical inclusivity of Christ—so that those who say yes to the call today, and in generations to come, will do so without regret.



EASTER PASTORAL LETTER: A Living Hope in Christ

—By Rev. Pumla Nzimande

Beloved people of God,

Warm Easter greetings to you all.

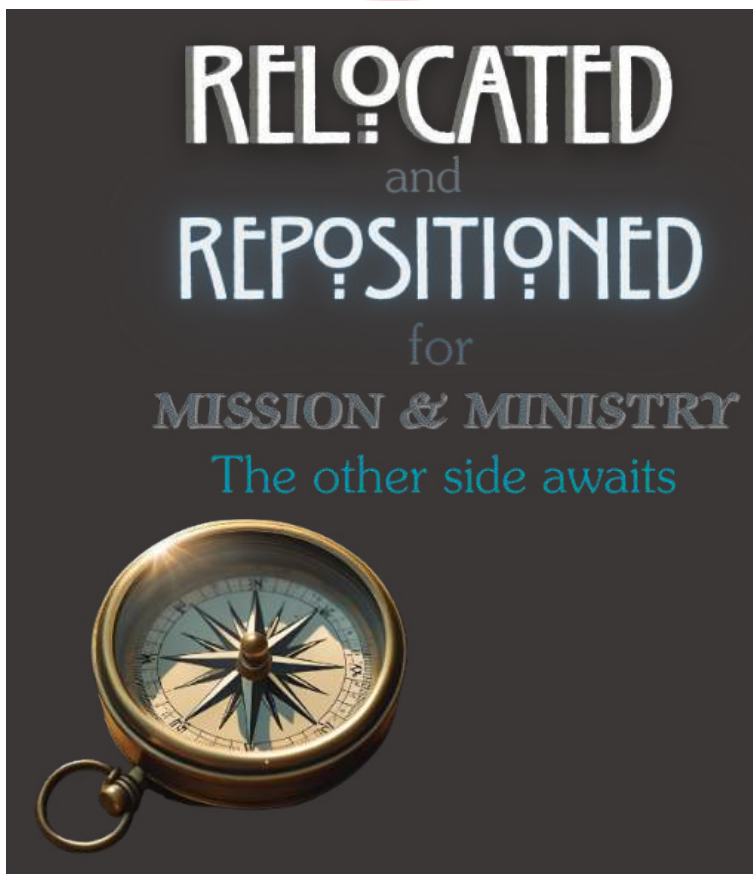
As we gather across our Connexion this Easter season—amid the varied realities of our nations, communities, and congregations—we are drawn again to the heart of our faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is not merely a historical event we remember; it is a living, transformative power that speaks into our present realities with hope, courage, and renewal.

We cannot ignore the unsettling state of our world. The intensifying geopolitical tensions, the ongoing war in the Middle East, and the ripple effects of global unrest weigh heavily upon humanity. These realities remind us that we are deeply interconnected, and that conflict, displacement, economic instability, and fear do not remain confined to one region—they shape the life of the whole world.

Yet, it is precisely within such turbulence that the Easter message becomes most profound. Jesus himself lived, ministered, and was crucified within a deeply politicised and oppressive context under the Roman Empire. The cross stands at the intersection of political power, social injustice, and spiritual struggle. And still, it is there—in that space of suffering, contestation, and uncertainty—that we encounter God.

We encounter the God who liberates. The God who journeys with His people. The God who brings winds of change.

In Christ, we see a God who does not remain distant from human struggle but enters fully into it—transforming it from within. The resurrection, then, is God's decisive declaration that systems of oppression, like those of Rome, do not have the final word. God is at work—socially, economically, politically, and spiritually—bringing renewal and



justice, even where the forces of death appear strongest.

The message of the cross is one of liberation for all—a liberation that restores dignity, confronts injustice, and proclaims life in its fullness. The message of Easter is one of hope and renewal: that what we are losing in our societies—our ethics, our values, our sense of shared humanity, and the sanctity of life—can be restored, reimagined, and resurrected in Christ. Easter assures us that God is not finished with creation. We live in the promise that all creation is being drawn toward freedom, healing, and wholeness.

The resurrection calls us not only to believe, but to live differently. We are invited into a new way of being—one marked by love that overcomes fear, justice that challenges oppression, and compassion that restores dignity. As the Methodist people, shaped by a Wesleyan heritage, we are reminded that holiness is both personal and social. The risen Christ sends us into the world as agents of transformation.

In this season, I urge every society, circuit, and district to embody resurrection life in tangible ways:

- To be communities of radical welcome, where all—especially women, young people, and those on the margins—find belonging and voice.
- To be prophetic witnesses, speaking truth to power and standing against all forms of injustice, including gender-based violence, corruption, and exclusion.
- To be bearers of hope, reaching out in acts of service, solidarity, and care for those most vulnerable among us.

I also call upon our ministers and preachers, especially in this sacred season, to resist the temptation of gimmicks, spectacle, or performative drama in the pulpit, and

instead proclaim the depth, integrity, and transformative truth of the Gospel with reverence and authenticity.

Let us also remember that resurrection is preceded by the cross. We do not ignore suffering; we carry it with faith, trusting that God is at work even in the darkest moments. Easter assures us that God's redemptive power is already unfolding, often in ways we do not yet fully see.

May this Easter renew our courage to lead, to serve, and to hope. May we be a Church that not only proclaims "Christ is risen," but lives as a resurrected people—faithful, just, and full of grace—until all creation is set free.

I pray that the peace of the risen Christ fills your hearts, your homes, and our Connexion.

Yours in the risen Christ,



YOUTHQUAKE IN AFRICA: METHODIST YOUTH CONVERGE IN SOUTH AFRICA TO DRIVE TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE

— By Nana Yaw Ampofo Ayew
Communications Officer, Africa Methodist Council Youth Movement (AMCYM)



From Wednesday, 18 March to Sunday, 22 March 2026, the Emseni Christian Centre in South Africa became a vibrant hub of creativity, faith, and youthful energy as the Africa Methodist Council Youth Movement (AMCYM) successfully held its continental inaugural conference under the compelling theme “*Youthquake in Africa: Driving Transformation and Change.*”



Hosted by the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, together with her Executive team, the conference brought together over one hundred (100) delegates drawn from Methodist Conferences across the African continent and beyond. Participating Churches included the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Methodist Church Ghana, Methodist Church The Gambia, AME Zion Church (WWAED and CSAED), United Methodist Church of Zimbabwe (East and West Annual Conferences), United Methodist Church Mozambique, Methodist Church in Kenya, United Methodist Church West Africa Region, United Methodist Church Nigeria, and the Enfield Methodist Circuit of the London Methodist District, Methodist Church Zimbabwe.



The gathering was honoured by the presence of the leadership of the Africa Methodist Council (AMC), the President, Most Rev. Dr. Paul K. Bofo, and the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Martin Mujinga, whose participation reaffirmed the Council’s strong commitment to youth inclusion and leadership formation within African Methodism.



The conference featured rich and thought-provoking plenary sessions designed to provoke action and deepen strategic thinking among Methodist youth leaders. Rev. Dr. Martin Mujinga opened discussions with a compelling presentation on the *Development of the Africa Methodist Council*, charting the Council’s journey and its growing role on the continent. The Very Rev. Gideon D. Osabutey, Interim Chairman of AMCYM, delivered an insightful lecture on *Youth and Technology*, urging young people to harness digital innovation as a tool for mission, advocacy and development.



Adv. Thando Gumede, a distinguished Human Rights Defender and Pan-Africanist in South Africa, challenged delegates to pursue justice, dignity, and accountable leadership, while Rev. Barry K. Bofo inspired participants

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with a presentation on *African Methodist Youth Driving Faith-Based Environmental Stewardship*. The plenary series concluded with Rev. Lwazi Kondlo (a Minister of the MCSA), who critically examined *Revitalizing Sustainable Economic Pathways for Africa*, calling on Methodist youth to become thoughtful stewards and entrepreneurial change-makers.

Beyond dialogue and learning, the conference also provided space for fellowship, networking, and reflection. Delegates participated in heritage and leisure visits, including tours to Nelson Mandela House and Desmond Tutu House, grounding the conference experience within South Africa's powerful legacy of faith-inspired justice and reconciliation.

The conference during its deliberations also promulgated the AMCYM by-laws which seeks to direct the operations of the Movement. Conference members contributed greatly to the draft which was finally reviewed by a standing legal committee of conference made up of Lawyers from the various conferences.



Another key milestone of the conference was the election of substantive AMCYM officers to serve from 2026–2030, conducted under the joint chairmanship of the AMC

President and General Secretary. The newly elected executives are:



- **Chairperson: Elsie A. A. L. Macauley (Methodist Church The Gambia)**
- **Vice Chairperson: Rev. Derek Ben Kwofie (AME Zion Church – WWAED)**
- **Secretary: Sivuyile Sean Giba (Methodist Church of Southern Africa)**
- **Treasurer: Pamela Matema (United Methodist Church, Zimbabwe)**
- **Communications Officer: Nana Yaw Ampofo Ayew (Methodist Church Ghana)**
- **Chaplain: Rev. Dr. Nene Muthuri (Methodist Church in Kenya)**
- **Ex-Officio: Very Rev. Gideon D. Osabutey (Methodist Church Ghana)**

The conference reached its spiritual climax on Sunday with an impressive and spirit-filled Induction and Thanksgiving Service, officiated by Most Rev. Dr. Paul Kwabena Bofo and ably supported by Rev. Pumla Nzimande. The service underscored the sacred trust placed on the new leadership and renewed the collective resolve of Africa Methodist youth to be agents of transformation.

PRESTIGIOUS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN FILM AND TELEVISION AWARDS

Congratulations to Magic Hlatshwayo on receiving the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the South African Film and Television Awards. We celebrate this remarkable honour with him and his family.

A legendary actor and film director, he is widely recognised for his roles across numerous television series and for his lasting contribution to the creative industry. Beyond the screen, he has also made significant contributions to the Church through his leadership, having served as LP District President and General President.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEWLY ELECTED CONNEXIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

General President: Ms Emmah Welcome
Vice General President: Ms Debrah Mohale
General Secretary: Ms Lizzy Maffoko
General Statistical Secretary: Ms Khosi Masina
Treasurer: Ms Sibusisiwe Dube
Finance Committee: Ms Masechaba Momeka & Ms Lulama Ntloko
Spirituality: Ms Juliet Mogwane
Evangelism: Ms Segametse Tebatso
Justice and Service: Ms Alinah Seabe
Human and Economic Empowerment: Ms Mmule Moropa
Education: Ms Betty Mrwebi



SANIBONANI: Good Day Out There Theological and Spiritual Reflections of Anything and Everything

—By Rev. Mike Vorster



At home I am surrounded by artists. My daughter and son-in-law work in the creative economy space.

Two friends are artists, Estelle Hudson and Rev. Phil Bauser. When it comes to art, I know what I don't like: landscapes and animals. Even photographs of these I find rather irksome. Don't get me started on the paintings of the little boy and girl with a tear running down their cheeks.

Art in my opinion does little justice to the authentic beauty of these. A landscape and animal sightings should be enjoyed in the moment and observing the changing colours of the landscape. A static elephant or lion, or any such wild animal, in my opinion, loses its beauty. These must be savoured in the moment and then described to others your excitement and keen sightedness of the beauty. For me the story is better than the limiting snapshot—be it a painting or photograph.

I will avoid speaking about the appalling religious paintings found in churches.

Using one's cellphone to take pictures of sunsets and sunrises are just awful. And a waste of time. I have fallen into this trap. I have countless of these pics on my phone. I am in the process of deleting all of them. Telling someone 'You should have been there to see it' is far better than the boring snapshot on your phone.

Some time ago, I attended a seminar at the National Arts Festival, at which the famous South African actor John Kani spoke. Kani said something profound that has remained with me ever since: "A nation without art is a nation without a soul".

Art is a language and should be recognised as such. How to understand art should become part of the school curriculum from Grade R to Grade 12. Perhaps Art-language should become an addition to our official languages of SA.

During a visit in August 2025 to the Zeits Museum, Cape Town, was an "aha!" learning moment of how to cypher art and make it more meaningful for oneself—by making use of the

lenses of the eight themes of absorbing art.

This was the blurb from the programme pamphlet:

"Our collection is thoroughly contemporary and addresses several relevant discourses in Africa and the world today, like migration, human rights, visibility, memory, and desire. Notably, it includes works by some of the most celebrated artists working in the world today. We also hold comprehensive bodies of work from singular artists like Nandipha Mntambo, Zanele Muholi, and Kudzanai Chiurai, amongst others.

There are a myriad of ways to describe the works in this exhibition, but we have picked eight key adjectives that speak to the variety of objects and ideas in the exhibition. Our glossary below is a guide to some of those related to the themes and concepts explored by artists.

MONOCHROME—often used to describe artworks that are black-and-white, this word comes from **mono (one)** and **chroma (color)**; **SERIAL**—in series; similar or even identical individual artworks that come together in succession to form a larger body of work.; **QUEER**—a reclaimed umbrella term for LGBTQ+ people and other "outsiders" to social norms of gender and sexuality. **POLITICAL**—relating to systems of power and social structures like nations, governments, and institutions. **TEXTUAL**—using or relating to written language; based on reading and writing words to create meaning. **CAMP**—having a deliberately theatrical sensibility; wittily extravagant; "extra". **UNCANNY**—slightly off or odd, and unsettlingly so, being beyond what is normal or expected; strange and mysterious; relates especially to the human figure. **ORGANIC**—coming from natural living matter like a plant, an animal, or the soil."

Should you want to experience an integration between art and the scriptures. I would highly recommend Henri Nouwen's book: *The return of the prodigal son: A story of a homecoming*. Nouwen takes us on a meditative

journey as we are asked to read the Scriptural Story of the Prodigal son and reflect on Rembrandt's painting 'Prodigal son'



Allow me to give Theo Coggin, a former editor of Dimension, the space to give us a perspective on the art of Rev. Phillip Bauser.

VIBRANT ART BRIGHTENS THE DAY By Theo Coggin

The vibrant artworks of Florida artist, Phillip Bauser, stood in sharp contrast to the overcast weather of Saturday 21 March as he put a selection of his works on private show and publicly launched his new website, www.phillipbauser.co.za.

The website has been developed by fellow Floridian with artistic flair and dancing teacher, Mark Tadford.

Well-known on the West Rand as the former minister of the Florida Methodist Church, Phillip brings a lively interpretation to his artwork. The themes of his pieces vary considerably and are a reflection of the artist's wide experience of a world of joyfulness and love, the power of nature, and the interests of his fellow South Africans in the world in which they live.

Phillip's bedrock of his role as an artist is clear. He says, "I am committed to justice and peace for all people, religions, cultures, and the wellbeing of nature and the earth.

"I am an artist specialising in oils. I am a potter and sculptor of clay. I am a photographer. I am a creative and I enjoy telling stories."

To achieve his vision he has identified places in his life that are special— "where I can be quiet and still to slow down, meditate, imagine, and practise the discipline of art. Thus it is not only the art room, but the potter's room, the garden and hothouse, the bushveld, that are all sanctuaries of remaining centred in this beautiful yet crazy world," he adds.



** Phillip (right) is pictured with a painting entitled "The Court Jester", which magnificently typifies the role of a court jester in real life, by pointing out that the king is really the fool. In this way, the court jester can speak truths that others cannot. On the left is Mark Tadford, who designed the website.*



Media contact:
Revd. Phillip Bauser

**Photo by Ruth Coggin*

AMC PRESIDENT PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO MCSA PRESIDING BISHOP

The Most Rev. Dr Paul Kwabena Boafo, President of the Africa Methodist Council (AMC) and former Presiding Bishop of the Ghana Methodist Church, paid a courtesy visit to Rev. Pumla Nzimande, Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), at the Connexional Office in Bruma, Johannesburg.

The AMC President was in South Africa for the inaugural AMC Youth Movement Conference, which was successfully hosted by the MCSA under the able leadership of Rev. Phezile Koekoe, Director of the Children and Youth Unit, together with his executive team and the local organising committee.

The AMC operates primarily across Central, East, West, and Southern Africa, with English, French, and Portuguese as its main working languages. The Council's headquarters are in Accra, Ghana.

The vision of the Council is: To be a unifying Wesleyan movement for holistic evangelism for the transformation of Africa and humanity.



Its mission is: To equip Methodists for Christian ministry and active involvement in the socio-economic development of Africa and the world. The Council is a family of 45 Methodist Conferences connected by a shared heritage and faith, grounded in the Wesleyan tradition. These include Wesleyan Methodists, United Methodists, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, African Methodist Episcopal, Free Methodists, United African Methodist Church organisations,

the Christian Episcopal Methodist Church, and the United Church of Zambia. The purpose of the Council is to bring together all Methodist, United, and Uniting Churches in Africa into fellowship and to speak with one voice on matters affecting the continent's socio-political, economic, and religious life.

The Most Rev. Dr Paul Kwabena Boafo was accompanied by his son, Rev Barry. Boafo, who is currently pursuing postgraduate studies in South Africa and worships at Bethesda Methodist Church in the Central District.

WHEN PRAISE AND TRUTH MEET

By Rev. Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu

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



As we sing with the children, wave our branches, and as we join the crowd in that ancient cry of “Hosanna,” we are not remembering something that once happened. We are entering it, placing ourselves within that moment where voices rise, where expectation fills the air, and where a people cry out for salvation. They believe they understand what that salvation will look like, expecting power, expecting visible change, expecting a king who will overturn everything quickly and decisively. Yet, even as we sing, the Gospel tells us that Jesus enters differently, not with force or spectacle, but on a donkey, humble, exposed, and unmistakable in a way that unsettles the very expectations that surround him.

Matthew tells us that the whole city is in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” The crowds respond, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee,” and even in that response there is both recognition and limitation.

They see something of who he is, but not yet the fullness of what his coming means. So even as we join the crowd, we are drawn into that same question, not only who Jesus is, but what it means to follow him when his way does not align with our expectations.

And even as we continue to sing, there is already a tension beneath the surface, because the same crowd that cries “Hosanna” will not hold its voice. The same voices that rise in praise will falter, and the same gathering that feels so certain will not remain.

Jesus knows this, which is why he says that if the people were silent, the stones would cry out. In that statement there is both warning and revelation, because truth does not depend on our willingness to name it. It does not disappear when we hesitate, and it does not soften itself to fit within our comfort. Even as we sing, the question presses itself upon us.

If truth will speak even when we do not, then what does it mean for us, here and now, as we worship, as we gather, and as we proclaim faith, to remain present to what is difficult, to allow truth to disturb us, and to refuse the temptation to move too quickly toward comfort.

I have been sitting with what has recently taken place at the United Nations, where what has long been known has once again been spoken aloud, the transatlantic enslavement of African people named as a crime against humanity.

What remains with me is not only the naming itself, but the hesitation that surrounds it, the careful language, and the measured responses. The concern with how such truth is framed suggests that the issue lies in words rather than in what those words are trying to hold, and it shows that even now truth is being managed rather than fully received.

There are truths that do not live in language alone.

They are not contained within statements or declarations, but remain in places, in walls, in the weight of air, and in a silence that is not empty but saturated with what has been endured.

I have stood in such a place, at Cape Coast Castle, where history does not feel distant or concluded, but present, pressing, and impossible to hold at arm’s length. The stones bear witness. The ground carries the imprint of bodies, prayers, and cries. Even the air carries a density that feels disturbingly close to the presence of human flesh, as though what has happened there has not left.

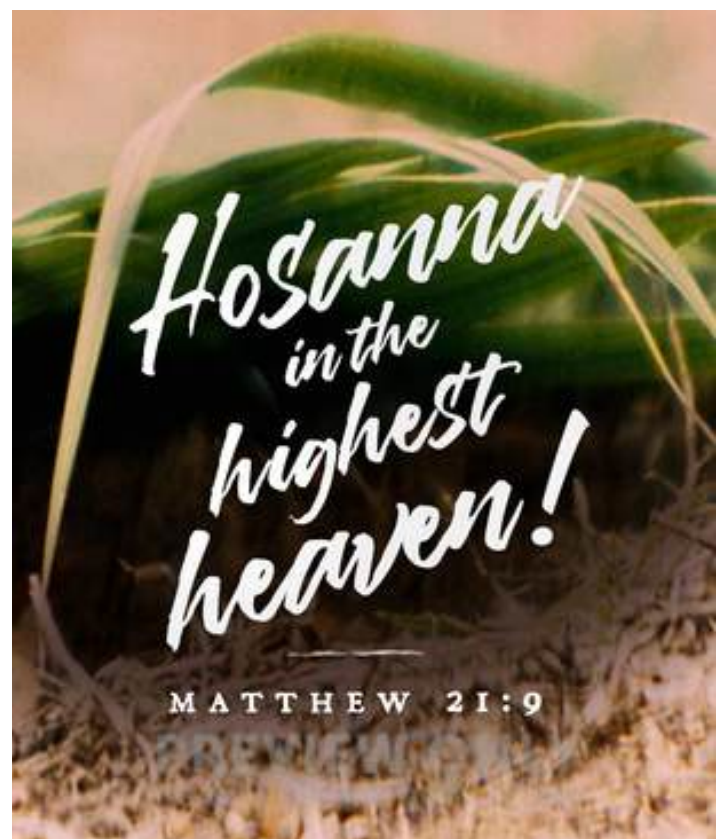
And what must be said, even as we sing, is this. Above those dungeons, worship continued. Prayers were spoken, hymns were sung, and theology was taught, not in ignorance but in coexistence.

That is the scandal, not only that such suffering took place, but that it was held alongside faith without interruption. It is as though proclamation could remain untouched by what it stood upon, as though the cries below could be contained and kept separate from the worship above.

If we are to speak as Christians, then we must begin here. Every human being bears the image of God, without exception.

That truth is not abstract or optional, it is foundational. What was done in those spaces was not only violence against bodies, but the desecration of that image.

This cannot remain a statement of belief alone. It must shape how we see, how we speak, how we respond, and even how we write.



REV. DR LIBUSENG-LIBAKA KETSHABILE: *Manyano Foremost Feminist Theologian*

— By Prof. R. Simangaliso Kumalo

Dr Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile will go down in history as one of the finest and fiercest feminist theologians the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) ever produced. Her influence in the Church went beyond the realms of the clergy and ordained ministry. First and foremost, she was a womanist and a feminist, who balanced the struggle for women's emancipation with the commitment to being a wife to her husband, mother to her children, sister to siblings, niece to uncles, pastor to her many congregants, and respected theologian to her peers. She was a woman of many faces, but one that remained consistent, not without struggle and criticality from her side, was that she was a member of the Women's Manyano. She started by joining the Young Women's Manyano in the Harrismith and QwaQwa Circuit and was robed by Mrs Agnes Pakies. She served this movement passionately and faithfully until she offered for the ministry in 1981. After getting married to Rev. Kenaleone Ketshabile and the two becoming the first clergy couple in the MCSA, the Church did not know how to respond to their situation. She was then robed as a member of the Women's Manyano and became a president of the organisation. She used her position as president to fight for the rights of women in the Church. But before we look at her contribution, we turn to the beginnings of her life story. Who was Dr Ketshabile and where did she come from?

The Rev. Dr Libuseng Sophy Lebaka-Ketshabile was born on 5 October 1958, in Role-lea-Thunya (Rouxville) in the Free State Province of South Africa. She was the last born of six children (four boys and two girls), born to Abram Tshotlo and Emily Lipuo Lebaka. Her family moved from Rouxville to QwaQwa, the then Basotho homeland, in 1965. She was seven years old at this time. She attended her primary and middle school at Makong School. After completing her matric, she offered for the ministry and did her theological training at the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM). This is where she met her husband, Rev. Dr Kenaleone Ketshabile, and they got married in 1986, becoming the first clergy couple in the MCSA. Her studies at FEDSEM were to be followed by a string of qualifications which she obtained from institutions in South Africa and abroad. These included two Masters degrees, Diplomas, and a Doctor of Ministry which she earned from San Francisco Theological Seminary in California, USA. When she came back to South Africa, she served in a number of portfolios including teaching at the



Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC), John Wesley College (Kilnerton), and served the Department of Social Development as Director for seventeen years. She also served in a number of committees within the MCSA. But of relevance to this publication is her contribution to the development of womanist theology, which informed her service and interaction with the Women's Manyano. I would like to examine three themes that can be drawn from her views on this organisation.

When the Ketshabiles completed their studies at FEDSEM, the Church did not know what to do with this clergy couple. How do you station a husband-and-wife team? Rev. Andrew Losaba, who later became President of Conference, was the superintendent in Bloemfontein and had a good relationship with the couple. He made a request to Conference to station them in Bloemfontein under his superintendence so that he could support their ministries and also assist the Church in finding a station for them. Whilst in Bloemfontein, Libuseng got

pregnant and the Church did not know what to do with a female minister who was pregnant. As a result, she served in the Circuit until a few weeks before she was to give birth to her firstborn. Seeing this situation of her pregnancy and still not in Manyano uniform, Mrs Annah Madise, who was the District President, and Cynthia Lubisi, who was General President, decided to robe her with the Manyano uniform and cape which she agreed and sought to serve the Manyano diligently.

However, within six months of her robing, Rev. Ketshabile dropped the cape. This she did for three principal reasons. Her husband states the first reason by saying that:

She believed that the cape separated women by status. The ministers' wives were accorded senior status simply because of the cape which was a symbol of power and authority. Then she decided to drop it.¹

Originally the word cape comes from the Latin word *cappa* meaning cape in English. Capes are from the Anglican tradition where they are used for very formal services of Holy Communion. Capes originated amongst monastic orders of the Catholic church. They were meant to protect monks from cold during processions. Capes did not have liturgical meaning and value at the beginning but that developed over time. They are worn by everybody in the

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clergy category. However, the Methodist Women's Manyano adopted the cape and used it exclusively for ministers' wives as a symbol of their office.

Firstly, Libuseng felt that it was a symbol of power which divided women between the powerful and the powerless and so she did not want to use it for the rest of her life as a minister's wife and president of the Manyano. She remained with the uniform worn by every Manyano member because of her belief in equality of all women, certainly not in the elevation of some women over others based on marriage to clergy. That, for her, was belittling the real status of women which was equal to that of men based on her theology of creation.

Secondly, she disagreed with the practice of Women's Manyano robing ministers' wives with the cape simply because they were married to ministers, even those who did not qualify—for instance, the Manyano has the practice of robing a minister's wife who has not been a Methodist but belonging to another denomination. Then when they marry a minister, they are robed and made president overnight and have authority over older, highly experienced women who have been members of the Manyano for decades. For her that was clericalism, which is the privileging of the clergy over the laity in the leadership of the church.² For Dr Ketshabile, this was an injustice against the well-established members of the organisation. She spoke eloquently about it and it made her unpopular with most clergy wives. She respected the role of a minister's wife in the Church, but it needed to be earned through training and dedication. Linked to that, is the point that respect for the dignity of women and her ministry should not be linked to the status of her husband, but must have a right and standing of its own. In a conversation with one of the retired Bishops, he shared a story of a minister's wife who refused to be robed and even join the Manyano, because she was Anglican—the couple later got divorced.

Thirdly, she believed that the cape undermined the equality of ministry in a clergy couple when the wife wore it. It subjected her to her husband's authority and ministry even though she was a minister in her own right and the two share an equality of ordination. Submission to the cape by a minister's wife was sacrificing the equality of her ordination to her husband's authority. However, she continued playing her role as president of the Manyano, but without the cape. She believed that the Manyano was a very important organisation for uniting women to work for their advancement and rights. However, this should be done by uniting them under the conviction that they are equals and share in the common oppression that comes as a result of patriarchy. She sought to push the boundaries and patriarchal tendencies entrenched by the cape.

She also fought for the recognition of women in the MCSA, be they clergy or laity. She was behind the founding of the Women in Ministry (WIM) to be the voice of women in ministry in the Methodist Church. She challenged conference on more than one occasion on the decision to consider suspending its business and focus on the reason behind the under-representation of women, when women were less than the numbers stipulated by the 40-40-20 policy of the Church. She did this on more than one occasion and almost brought conference to the brink of collapse.

When the Women's Manyano proposed that when a minister dies, the wife is not eligible for leadership positions

in the Manyano, she opposed that rule. She protected the widows from the indignity of marginalisation. She protested saying:

“You can say that, because you still have your husbands. You have not come to experience the pain of a minister's wife who, after losing her partner, is then marginalised by the church and pushed to take the backseat. Think about what that does to that woman. Suddenly they do not have a role to play in the church, they became ineligible for election to positions. Why? Simply because she is a widow. How does that make us different from the practices of the Temple in the New Testament where widows were marginalised?³”

Advocating for the women's voice in the MCSA, she called for change and better policies for women in the Church. She had a difficult relationship with the Manyano because of her leaning towards social justice issues when the Manyano was still struggling with that posture. However, her struggles were not just with the Manyano. Men who demonstrated patriarchal tendencies did not escape her sharp criticism and attention. When a very senior minister of the Church expressed patriarchal views on a certain woman minister in a private conversation that unfortunately spread through social media, Dr Ketshabile led a protest march by women in ministry to Bruma-Lake, the head-office of the MCSA. This was a historic march, the first one to be organised and led by women in the ministry of the MCSA, against their own Church to protest against continuing gender discrimination.

Her theological convictions and ideas were disseminated through the numerous papers she published in journals, books, and magazines on how women should be treated with dignity and respect in the Church as they are also created in God's image. She also took pride in her role as a married woman, a member of the women's Manyano, and also a wife to her supportive husband. They demonstrated an ideal home for a clergy family where the gifts of both partners were recognised and appreciated. Rev. Dr K Ketshabile was then appointed Bishop of the then KNB District. She was also appointed as acting Bishop of the Northern Free State and Lesotho District. She was on her way to a landslide victory in those elections, had she not been interrupted by COVID-19 that ended her life prematurely.

In the history of the Women's Manyano, Dr Ketshabile became an epitome of an African feminist thinker. As a great feminist theologian who joined the Manyano, she followed in the foot-steps of great women theologians like Mercy Oduyoye, (Ghana) and Lilian Siwila (Zambia), who were inspired by their theology to join and serve the Women's Manyano, and enriching its theology. The Manyano benefitted from her teachings through her fiery sermons, Bible studies, and lessons. However, I am not sure if they listened to her critiques and sought to learn from her. An opportunity to be led by her wisdom and passion for women's liberation was missed. However, the Manyano can still revisit her sermons, papers, and videos to learn from her constructive criticism.

¹ Telephonic interview with Dr KK Ketshabile on 31 April 2024.

² Names not mentioned to protect the identity of the former couple.

³ Quoted from an interview with Dr KK Ketshabile on 31 April 2024.

THE BIBLE PROVIDES A GUIDE TO ELECTING LEADERS

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



Elections always present an opportunity for people to choose those whom they believe will lead and represent their aspirations. More often than not, this process is accompanied by the hope for a better life and a society in which people are treated with dignity and respect. The relationship between the elected and the electorate should be characterised by mutual respect and shared goals.

When electing leaders for a bright future, it is important to choose the right people to lead our communities and nation. It is wise to elect those who fear God and demonstrate a genuine relationship with Him. Godly leaders possess the ability to act with wisdom, integrity, and fairness.

Whenever we think about electing leaders, we must first consider the qualities that make a good leader. A true leader is a servant of the people. Their responsibility is to improve the lives of others through a demonstrated servant heart. Leaders with such a heart become role models, leading by example and inspiring others. Their character is evident in their actions—showing love for the people they serve, and humility in serving them with respect and dignity.

As the Bible teaches, “When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan” (Proverbs 29:2).

This Scripture provides guidance for evaluating those who are in public office or who aspire to it. We must exercise wisdom. We should vote for leaders whose lives are marked by righteousness, bringing joy to the people they lead, rather than those whose actions are characterised by wickedness and result in the suffering of the people.

Romans 13:1 states, “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” However, this does not mean that Christians should ever allow the government to compel them to disobey God.

We are called to live at peace with the state, provided that the state understands its responsibility to govern in accordance with the will of God. Jesus and the apostles did not disobey governing authorities for personal reasons. When they did resist, it was in obedience to God’s moral standards. Such resistance was costly—they were threatened, beaten, imprisoned, tortured, and even executed for their convictions.

Closer to home, many within a certain generation witnessed similar persecution in South Africa when people resisted the apartheid government. That regime governed in ways that undermined the will of God and the dignity of God’s people, and many were prepared to accept the consequences of their resistance.

If the state becomes corrupt, we should distance ourselves from its wrongdoing while remaining responsible citizens. We are called to uphold what is good, as long as the government does not act against God and the well-being of His people. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, those

elected into positions of authority are servants of God, entrusted with the responsibility to do good. Leaders are elected to serve the people—not to be served.

Praying for those elected into positions of responsibility does not absolve us from holding them accountable. Not all who seek leadership, especially in government, have genuine intentions.

We must remember that God is at work in our lives, and that those elected into positions of authority have a responsibility to cultivate a relationship with Him that enables that work. The love of God should be visible in their lives and actions.

When we are given the opportunity to vote in local government elections—or in by-elections—the Scriptures encourage us to choose leaders who understand the importance of a right relationship with God.

In electing leaders, we must also recognise the importance of prayer in their lives. Praying for those in authority underscores our commitment to entrusting them to God’s guidance.

Ultimately, true authority exists not for personal gain, but to serve the people of God.

Those elected must recognise that there is no room for corruption, self-enrichment, mediocrity, or a lack of service delivery.



IMPORTANT DATES IN APRIL

March	29 Mar – 05 Apr	Holy Week	
April	02	Maundy Thursday	
April	03	Good Friday	
April	04-14	Connexional Children and Youth Unit Global Action 4/14 Campaign	
April	05	Easter Sunday	
April	06	Family Day	
April	08	Boundaries Sub-Committee: Molopo Conversations	Gaborone
April	11	Connexional Executive Meeting	Hybrid
April	13-16	Order of Deacons' Convocation	TBA
April	14	Connexional Unit Leaders' Meeting	MCO
April	14	Connexional Audit Committee Meeting	
April	15	Finance Unit Executive Meeting	Virtual
April	22	District Trust Properties Secretaries' Consultation	Virtual
April	23	Prospective Ordinands' Examination	All Districts
April	28	Human Resources Unit Board Meeting	Virtual
April	29	Church Unity Commission Executive	Virtual

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

Lent	Liturgical Colour: Purple
<i>Good Friday A – 03 April 2026</i> Isaiah 52:12-53:12 – Psalm 22 – Hebrews 10:16-25 OR Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 – John 18:1-19:42	
Easter	Liturgical Colour: Gold
<i>Easter Sunday A – 05 April 2026</i> 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	
<i>Easter 2A – 12 April, 2026</i> Acts 2:14a, 22-32 – Psalm 16 – 1 Peter 1:3-9 – John 20:19-31	
<i>Easter 3A – 19 April, 2026</i> Acts 2:14a, 36-41 – Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 – 1 Peter 1:17-23 – Luke 24:13-35	
<i>Easter 4A – 26 April, 2026</i> Acts 2:42-47 – Psalm 23 – 1 Peter 2:19-25 – John 10:1-10	
<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	

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Nimrod S Nyembenya
Rev Mtunzi Belani

*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*

