



The Methodist Church
of Southern Africa

Another Dimension

MAY 2026



PUBLIC LECTURE HONOURS THE MINISTRY AND PUBLIC WITNESS OF REV. MUSI LOSABA

A public lecture reflecting on the life, ministry, and leadership of Rev. Musi Losaba, General Secretary of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) and former Bishop of the then Grahamstown District, offered a rich and deeply personal exploration of his contribution to the Church, ecumenical witness, and South African public life.

Presented by Rev. Dr Sidwell Mokgothu, the lecture drew from interviews and reflections from clergy colleagues, ecumenical partners, church leaders, and those who have journeyed alongside Rev. Losaba over many years.

The lecture began by locating Rev. Losaba's story within both Methodist heritage and the broader South African struggle tradition. Mokgothu reflected on meeting Rev. Losaba in the 1980s in Itsoseng, in the then Bophuthatswana homeland, where their shared commitment to the church and political activism for the freedom of South Africa formed the basis of a lifelong friendship and ministry partnership.

"Two commitments brought Botsotso, or Sticks as we called him, and me together: our commitment to the church

and our political activism for the freedom of South Africa."

The lecture highlighted the strong Methodist lineage from which Rev. Losaba emerged. Like John Wesley, Rev. Losaba was described as "a child of the manse," shaped by generations of Methodist ministry and witness. Particular emphasis was placed on the influence of his parents and grandparents, whose lives embodied evangelism, discipline, music, and faithful service within the Methodist tradition.

Mokgothu noted that while Rev. Losaba carries the influence of his father, the late Rev. Andrew Losaba, he deliberately forged his own ministerial identity.

"One may inherit a rich spiritual legacy without plagiarising it."

The lecture further explored themes of migration and itinerancy as central to both the Losaba family story and Methodist identity itself. Tracing the family's roots from Botswana into South Africa, Mokgothu reflected on how movement, migration, and mission shaped generations of ministry.

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This theme became a bridge into a broader reflection on the contemporary migration crisis in South Africa. The lecture challenged both the Church and society to respond to migration with maturity, justice, and compassion rather than violence and populism.

“We cannot oppose lawlessness by becoming lawless ourselves.”

The Church, Mokgothu argued, has a responsibility to embody both prophetic witness and pastoral care in responding to social tensions surrounding migration.

A major focus of the lecture was Rev. Losaba’s ecumenical and missionary ministry. Having served both as Director of Ecumenical Affairs and Director of the Mission Unit within the MCSA, Rev. Losaba was described as embodying “an ecumenical missionary vocation” – one that crosses denominational, racial, social, and cultural boundaries in pursuit of the Gospel and the common good.

Drawing on the book *Hope in Times of Crisis: Reimagining Ecumenical Mission*, the lecture reflected on the weakening of ecumenical unity in South Africa and the tendency of churches to retreat into denominational silos.

“If mission belongs to God, *Missio Dei*, then our task is to discern what God is already doing in the suburbs, the inner city, the townships, and the informal settlements of our country.”

The lecture also highlighted Rev. Losaba’s role as a public theologian deeply rooted in community struggles and prophetic engagement. His work within the Nelson Mandela Bay Consultation of Christian Churches and the Moral Regeneration Movement was cited as an example of ministry that moves beyond theory into practical social transformation.

Mokgothu reflected critically on the present relationship between Church and political power in South Africa, warning against the dangers of churches losing their prophetic voice through proximity to political patronage and corruption.

“The Church must reject greed, corruption, and political patronage, and instead embody justice, accountability, and solidarity with ‘the wretched of the earth.’”

Rev. Losaba’s ministry was presented as an example of theology lived publicly—one rooted in justice, dialogue, reconciliation, and service to communities.

The final section of the lecture focused on Rev. Losaba’s leadership style, which was repeatedly described by colleagues as

inclusive, consultative, relational, and deeply empowering.

Drawing on leadership theory, Mokgothu described Rev. Losaba as a “multiplier leader” —one who amplifies the gifts, intelligence, and leadership of others rather than suppressing them.

“Leadership is rooted in communal harmony and collective responsibility... it values personal agency and communal flourishing.”

Examples were shared of Rev. Losaba mentoring younger leaders, encouraging innovation, and creating space for participation across generations within the Church.

At the same time, the lecture offered a balanced reflection on some of the limitations of highly consultative leadership, particularly in moments requiring rapid or decisive action.

Nevertheless, Mokgothu concluded that the patterns evident throughout Rev. Losaba’s ministry reveal a leader shaped by humility, strategic thinking, ecumenical vision, and deep commitment to the mission of the Church.

The lecture closed with a hopeful reflection on Rev. Losaba’s current role as General Secretary of the MCSA, noting that while it remains too early to fully assess his tenure, his life and ministry already offer important lessons for the present and future life of the Church.

“Everything that we do is in preparation for the next thing.”



Rev. Dr. Sidwell Mokgothu

NORTHFIELD HONOURS REV. TREVOR HUDSON AND RENAMES PASTORAL CARE CENTRE IN HIS HONOUR

The weekend of 2–3 May became a historic and deeply moving occasion for the Northfield Methodist community as worshippers, friends, clergy, and admirers from across the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) gathered at Northfield Methodist Church to honour one of the MCSA's most beloved spiritual leaders, Rev. Trevor Hudson.

The celebrations culminated on Sunday, 3 May, with the renaming of the Northfield Pastoral Care Centre to the Trevor Hudson Pastoral Care Centre, a fitting tribute to a man whose ministry has shaped generations through preaching, teaching, spiritual direction, counselling, and writing.

The weekend included an inaugural honorary lecture and gala dinner hosted under the leadership of Rev. Simphiwe Mthembu. Through personal stories and theological reflection, speakers painted a picture of a minister whose greatest legacy may not be found in titles or accomplishments, but in the countless lives transformed through his compassionate presence.

One quotation, often repeated by Hudson himself, captured the spirit of the occasion:

“Never forget that each person sits next to their pool of tears.”

A Ministry of Listening

Delivering the inaugural honorary lecture, Rev. Prof Tom Smith reflected on the distinctive qualities that have defined Hudson's ministry over nearly five decades. He described Hudson as “a maestro of listening” and “a gift of listening” whose ability to attend deeply to people has become one of his most profound acts of love.

Drawing on a quote Hudson himself has often used from German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Smith noted:

“Many people today are looking for an ear that will listen. They don't find it among Christians because Christians are talking instead of listening.”

According to Smith, Hudson's ministry has been marked by a rare ability to create spaces where people feel heard, seen, and valued. Through pastoral conversations, spiritual direction, correspondence, retreats, and his many books, he has helped countless people discover their own voice and deepen their relationship with God.

This ministry of listening has extended beyond denominational boundaries. Throughout his life Hudson has built bridges across Christian traditions, drawing wisdom from diverse streams of spirituality and introducing generations of South African Christians to voices such as Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, and Ignatius of Loyola.

Listening to the Groans of the World

Smith also highlighted Hudson's commitment to connecting spirituality with the realities of human suffering.

As a young minister, Hudson intentionally placed himself among people experiencing poverty, addiction, homelessness, and marginalisation. Rather than offering easy answers, he chose to listen to their stories and allow their experiences to shape his understanding of discipleship.

“Trevor helps the spiritual formation movement to be grounded in the groans and in the pools of tears,” Smith observed.

This concern for suffering neighbours became a defining characteristic of Hudson's ministry. Whether through pastoral care, social engagement, teaching, or writing, he consistently reminded Christians that spiritual formation must be connected to compassion, justice, and human dignity.

A Ministry That Touched Thousands

Guest speaker Rev. Hilton Volkwyn offered a deeply personal tribute, recalling his first encounter with Hudson more than fifty years ago at a youth rally in Coronationville and later serving alongside him in ministry in the Benoni Circuit.

“Every encounter with Trevor was impactful,” Volkwyn reflected. *“I would always come away feeling that I had been heard and seen.”*

He shared how Hudson's book *Signposts to Spirituality* helped redirect the course of his life and ministry after one simple but profound question challenged him during a Bible study: “What is your next step with God?”

That question ultimately led him back into ordained ministry.

“I am here because of a Bible study we did from Trevor's book,” Volkwyn said.

Today Hudson's influence reaches far beyond the local church. Having authored more than 30 books, his writings continue to guide seekers,

pastors, and spiritual directors across the world. Yet throughout the evening, speakers repeatedly returned to the same conclusion: his greatest impact has been personal rather than public.

Leadership Rooted in God's Love

Representing the Northfield community, Mr John Shead described Hudson as pastor, mentor, counsellor, spiritual father, and friend.

Reflecting on Hudson's years of ministry at Northfield, Shead spoke of hospital visits, late-night phone calls, coffee conversations, retreats, and countless moments of pastoral care that helped shape the congregation's spiritual life.

“One of the remarkable things about Trevor,” Shead said, “is that he has never treated ministry as a job. It has always been his passion and calling.”

Shead also highlighted Hudson's contribution to spiritual formation through retreats, Ignatian spirituality, and his relationships with internationally respected spiritual leaders.

“Thank you, Trevor. We appreciate you. Thank you for reminding us that the most powerful kind of leadership is servant leadership rooted in God's love.”

That emphasis on divine love was echoed in Smith's lecture, where he described one of Hudson's central theological convictions:

“We are God's beloved, loved with a Great Love, a Personal Love, a Trinitarian Love that will never let us go.”

According to Smith, everything in Hudson's ministry—his preaching, writing, spiritual direction, and friendships—flows from this conviction that people are deeply loved by God and invited into friendship with Christ.

A Life Still Bearing Fruit

In his response, Hudson expressed heartfelt gratitude for the love shown throughout the weekend. He thanked his wife Debbie, their children, partners, and grandchildren for their unwavering support throughout decades of ministry.

Closing his remarks, he quoted former United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld:

“For all that has been, thank you; for all that will be, yes.”

As the celebrations concluded and the Northfield Pastoral Care Centre officially became the Trevor Hudson Pastoral

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Care Centre, there was a profound sense that the occasion was about more than honouring a retired minister.

It was a celebration of a life devoted to listening, friendship, spiritual depth, compassionate service, and faithful



discipleship. As Rev. Prof Smith concluded in his tribute, “Trevor, you are a friend of Jesus, and we thank you for your friendship.”

To God be the glory for a life well lived and a ministry that continues to bear fruit in Southern Africa and around the world.

SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO REV. TREVOR A. HUDSON

— By Rev. Simphiwe Mthembu

It is a privilege and an honour for Northfield Methodist Church to pause and celebrate the remarkable ministry of one of the most gifted preachers in the Wesleyan tradition. Rev. Hudson’s ministerial journey began in 1972 as a Youth Worker at NYLTP under the mentorship of the Rev. Paul Walse. In 1973, he was received as a Candidate for Ministry of Word and Sacrament into the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. He served under President Rev. S.G. Pitts at Johannesburg Central and later under President Rev. J.C. Mvusi in Mthatha. His academic formation at Rhodes University (1975–1977) culminated in his ordination in 1978.

From 1979 to 1981, Rev. Hudson served at Central Mission in Johannesburg alongside Rev. Dr Peter Storey. This period further shaped his pastoral and prophetic voice. Among the many communities he served, his longest tenure was at Kempton Park Methodist Church (1982–1991). He then served a deeply impactful ministry at Northfield Methodist Church from 1992 to 2016. Even after his superannuation in 2017, Rev. Hudson has continued faithfully to preach, teach, and guide many, embodying a lifelong calling rather than a career. Without a doubt, Trevor’s outstanding work has been the co-founding of Northfield Methodist Church’s Pastoral Care Centre and Institute for Creative Conversation.

My introduction to Trevor Hudson began in 2005 during an informal discussion among fellow Phase One students. We were debating the greatest preacher, and while many names were confidently suggested, Rev. Luxolo Mantini introduced Trevor Hudson. He spoke of hearing Trevor preach and mentioned his work, *The Church with Open Doors*, and a Bible study he led at the Methodist Conference in Port Elizabeth

in July 2001. What truly stood out was not only the depth of his preaching but also the lasting impact of his stories. For example, the simple yet profound illustration of two men choosing the staircase over the elevator reminded us of the importance of intentional spiritual journeys over quick ascents.

Trevor’s storytelling was also characterised by familiar phrases that became part of his humanity.

One such phrase, “the woman to whom I am married,” affectionately referred to Debbie, his life partner in ministry and love. Through these expressions, we encountered not just a preacher but a deeply grounded human being whose life and message were seamlessly intertwined. Trevor’s work will be incomplete if we overlook his intentional approach to addressing racism, transformation, development, and breaking down barriers. My first encounter with him was at the Black Methodist Consultation at Calvary Methodist Church, where he passionately spoke about the urgent need for Christians to reclaim their role in restoring and building a nation. His inspiring talk motivated me to work tirelessly with Trinity Methodist Church to engage in small acts of reconciliation, transformation, and nation- building.

On Preaching and Teaching

Neither Trevor nor Debbie could likely recall the countless sermons, Bible studies, teachings, and personal conversations stemming from his life. However, his ministry’s significance lies not in numbers but in the transformative power of his words. Delivered with depth, grace, and authenticity, his messages have touched thousands and will continue to shape generations through books and digital media.

Trevor possesses a unique gift for words that carry life. Whether in a pulpit, small group, or unplanned encounter, he consistently offers something that speaks to the soul. His recurring emphasis on “healing, wholeness, and restoration” is deeply experiential, not theoretical. When he says “notice”, one learns to pause, for what follows is often an invitation into deeper awareness of God’s presence. One of his recent sermons, “Living Before an Audience of One”, continues to challenge many. In a world dominated by social media performance culture and even artificial intelligence, this message calls us back to a centred life lived for God alone, not applause. It’s a prophetic reminder for both church and society.

Above all, Trevor Hudson is a pastor—a true shepherd. His ministry extends beyond the pulpit into people’s lives through presence, listening, and care. Many at Northfield carry personal stories of moments when he journeyed with them through grief, uncertainty, and transformation. His pastoral ministry reflects the heart of Christ: attentive, compassionate, and quietly transformative.

To honour Rev. Trevor Hudson, we’ve created a tribute book inviting Northfielders and all who’ve been touched by his ministry to share their reflections and stories. No single tribute can fully capture his impact, but together, our voices form a tapestry of gratitude. As we honour Rev. Trevor Hudson, we give thanks to God for a life faithfully lived, a ministry that continues to bear fruit, and a witness that calls us all to deeper discipleship.

Rev. Simphiwe Mthembu is the Superintendent for Circuit and the resident minister at Northfield Methodist Church.

RATAU CHURCH: A DREAM BUILT ON FAITH, FRIENDSHIP AND GOD'S CALLING

There are moments in life when a single conversation changes the course of a person's journey forever. For Mr Reginald Mutsi, that moment came quietly in the early 2000s—through the caring words of a faithful servant of God named Ntate Mokhele.

At the time, Mr Mutsi was working in Pretoria while his family remained in Welkom. His weeks were consumed by work and travel, and Sundays often became little more than preparation for the long drive back. While his wife faithfully kept “the home fires burning” through regular church attendance, he found himself slowly drifting away from active participation in the life of the Church in which he had grown up.

Then one weekend, his wife told him that Ntate Mokhele—a steward, preacher, and dedicated Young Men's Guild member—wanted to speak to him.

The following Sunday morning, Mr Mutsi attended the service, and after worship, Ntate Mokhele gently spoke words that would stay with him for years to come.

“You grew up Methodist,” he reminded him. “Despite being busy with work, make time for God.”

Those simple words pierced his heart.

The next weekend, Mr Mutsi returned to church. Then he returned again the following week, and the week after that. Before long, church attendance became part of his life once more. Looking back, he reflects with deep gratitude and regret that he had almost failed to give time to the God who had blessed him so abundantly.

Months later, Ntate Mokhele appointed him as a class leader. But it was not the appointment itself that drew Mr Mutsi closer to him—it was the example he set.

He watched how Ntate Mokhele carried himself with humility and dignity. He saw how he faithfully stepped in whenever preachers could not make it to morning services. He observed the calm wisdom with which he handled turmoil within the Church. Over time, their relationship deepened beyond church meetings and duties.

Mr Mutsi visited his home, saw the simplicity and sincerity of his life, and recognised in him a true man of God.

“I became very attached to him,” he recalls. “Not because he appointed me, but because of the person he was.”

Years passed. Ntate Mokhele eventually retired and returned with his family to Thaba Nchu, selling his home and leaving behind the congregation where he had faithfully served. Yet distance did not weaken their bond. Every December, Mr Mutsi would send groceries to him and keep in touch through regular conversations.

Meanwhile, his own journey in the Church flourished. He became a steward and later rose to serve as District Lay Leader for the Northern Freestate and Lesotho District. Then tragedy struck.

Ntate Mokhele's only son passed away, Mr Mutsi travelled to the funeral in Thaba Nchu. Tragically, his wife also died and

it was at her funeral, amid grief and remembrance, that Ntate Mokhele shared a burden he had carried for years: the congregation had struggled to build a church. Funds had been mismanaged, progress had stalled, and his deepest wish was that before he died, he would see a proper church building standing for the people of God.

Not long after that conversation, Ntate Mokhele himself passed away.

At his funeral in June 2023, Mr Mutsi stood on the very ground where the new church would one day rise. Speaking as a “spiritual son”—a title that reflected the depth of their relationship—he heard himself making a promise he had never planned.

“God willing,” he said, “I want to see his dream come true. I want to be part of those who build this church.”

At the time, he had no money for such a project. Only faith. But sometimes faith begins long before provision arrives.

By 2025, Mr Mutsi had accumulated enough resources to begin construction of the new church building in Ratau. He believes wholeheartedly that God opened every door along the way—providing strength, vision, and even the right contractor, someone he had never met before but learned to trust completely.

A retired minister helped serve as liaison between him and the contractor, and together they watched the dream steadily become reality: brick by brick, wall by wall, until the church stood fully built and furnished.

Today, Mr Mutsi speaks about the project not with pride, but with overwhelming gratitude.

“I feel very fulfilled,” he says. “This is a place for worship, the house of God, a place for all of us to find God.”

Most importantly, he says, the church stands as a memorial to Ntate Mokhele—the man whose care, concern, and faithfulness helped shape his own spiritual journey. In honour of his mentor, a commemorative stone has been placed at the church.

“What touches me deeply,” Mr Mutsi reflects, “is that I was not born in Thaba Nchu. I was not baptised there. The community did not know me. It is only through Ntate Mokhele.”

He pauses thoughtfully before adding: “Had it not been for him, I would not have become as involved in the Church as I did. I became who I am because of him—and because of God's grace and love.”

For Mr Mutsi, the entire experience has taught him one profound lesson: obedience to God matters more than personal preference.

“It was God's prompting that led me to build the church there,” he says. “I could have chosen my own village instead. But when God speaks, you must do what He directs, not what you want to do.”

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With quiet joy and deep humility, he believes he has fulfilled the mission God placed on his heart.

And somewhere beyond the bricks, pews, and walls of the newly built Ratau Methodist Church lives the legacy of a faithful mentor whose simple invitation years ago changed another man's life forever.



YMG OUTREACH INSPIRES LEARNERS AT JONGIZIZWE HIGH SCHOOL

—By Rev. Ayande Mdimba

On 12 April 2026, members of the Young Men's Guild (YMG), under the presidency of Rev. Ayande Mdimba, from Tsojana Circuit 323 in the Kumkani Hintsa District, conducted a meaningful outreach programme at Jongizizwe High School in Tsomo CMC, under the direction of the principal, Mr. Mngqebisa uNkwali.

The day unfolded under clear, sunny skies, setting a warm and welcoming atmosphere for both learners and visitors. A highlight of the programme was the presence of Bro. Simphiwe Vilakazi, one of the well-known Amawele ase Chesterville (comedians), who delivered an inspiring motivational talk to the Grade 12 learners.

In his address, Bro. Vilakazi encouraged learners to apply to institutions of higher learning, including universities and TVET colleges. He challenged them to overcome any sense of inferiority complex or low self-esteem that may arise from their rural background. Emphasising the value of education, he also informed learners about NSFAS, explaining that it provides funding, either as a loan or a grant, depending on one's profile. His message strongly underscored that education remains a powerful tool for transforming lives.

Following the motivational session, learners were divided into two groups. Those who identify as females engaged in a session facilitated by members of W.M.P & S.U (Mamu Nkomo, Mamu Njobe, and Mamu Mahlasela) and Y.W.M. (Sis Nomfesane Mtamzeli). This session focused on self-

love, abstinence, and personal empowerment, creating a safe and supportive "girl-talk" environment.

Meanwhile, those who identify as males received guidance from the Vice President of YMG, Bro. Sonwabile Tshangana who is a professionally qualified social worker that deals with teenage criminality cases, together with senior members such as uTata u-Bonisile Tshaka and uTata u-D.S. Tshangana. They addressed critical issues affecting young men, particularly warning against involvement in boy camps fights (gangsterism ideology) that commonly occur around June. They highlighted the serious consequences of such actions, including the risk of acquiring a criminal record.

"At times cases delay, and when you are 18 years of age, you are charged and sentenced, sometimes even to life imprisonment, because of involvement in camp fights. Please, bantwana bam, take care of yourselves," they urged.

The outreach programme concluded on a joyful and generous note, as learners received gifts that included cosmetic items. The day ended with a shared meal, lovingly prepared by the mothers of Tsojana Circuit and provided by YMG members, symbolising unity, care, and community spirit, a tradition of breaking bread together which was instituted by Jesus Christ himself.

This impactful visit not only encouraged academic ambition, but also nurtured personal growth and responsible citizenship among the learners.



WOMEN'S MINISTRY FROM THE LAITY: A Journey I Have Travelled

— By Dr Zolela Ngcwabe (Former HESWA Lay Leader)

The MCSA has, within its heritage, a prophetic tradition of speaking truth to power and pursuing justice within society. The inclusion of women in full and equal ministry is not merely a matter of institutional fairness; it is an expression of the Gospel itself. When the Church invests in removing barriers, it gains not only greater equity, but also the full expression of the gifts God has placed within all God's people.

The barriers women face in ministry operate simultaneously at multiple levels of the Church. Understanding where each barrier is rooted is essential in targeting the appropriate response at the correct level of the institution.

Women have historically formed the backbone of faith communities, comprising the majority of church attendance worldwide, yet they remain significantly underrepresented in ordained ministry and leadership roles. Despite growing openness within our Church, persistent theological, cultural, institutional, and personal barriers continue to discourage women from pursuing vocational ministry.

We can use the Presiding Bishop's example—the video call encouraging female laity to accept the call into ministry. By default, women in ministry have now become a scarce skill.

This report examines these barriers and proposes practical solutions for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), structured around three critical levels of Church governance: the Circuit, the District, and the Connexion. By differentiating the challenges and responses at each level, the Church can move beyond general aspirations toward targeted structural transformation. Rather than using a SWOT analysis, this report proposes the use of an Iceberg Analysis model to uncover the deeper systemic and cultural issues beneath the visible challenges.

1.1 Circuit Level Challenges

At the Circuit level, challenges are primarily relational and cultural. This is where women in ministry encounter day-to-day resistance, where calling is either affirmed or quietly suppressed, and where the absence of visible role models is most acutely felt.

1. Barrier: Patriarchy and Gender Stereotypes

One of the greatest challenges is the persistence of patriarchal attitudes within both the Church and society. Many members still believe that leadership and preaching roles belong primarily to men. Women ministers are sometimes viewed as less capable of exercising spiritual authority simply because of their gender.

Some members find it difficult to accept women ministers. Women clergy are often treated as though they are inferior to their male counterparts. Members may greet "Ministers" separately from "Women in Ministry," as though women clergy are not ministers in the same sense as men.

2. Resistance to Female Leadership

Some Circuits and congregations resist being led by women ministers. Research shows that certain churches either refuse to accept, or struggle to accept, female ministers in leadership positions, especially as Superintendents or senior ministers.

The 40:40:20 resolution is sometimes misused as evidence that women cannot lead within the Church. Certain Districts and Circuits deliberately undermine female ministers in order to "prove" that women are not yet ready to lead the Church. In some Districts, women ministers are not permitted to bury members because this is still regarded as a male responsibility.

3. Balancing Ministry and Family Roles

Women ministers often face pressure to balance church responsibilities with traditional expectations associated with being wives, mothers, and caregivers. Male ministers frequently do not experience the same level of scrutiny regarding family responsibilities.

This should be recognised and managed as an emerging risk to the call of women ministers, as it can contribute to divorce, burnout, or broken family structures.

4. Lack of Support Systems

Many women ministers experience isolation and inadequate mentorship. Because there are fewer senior women clergy, younger women entering ministry often struggle to find role models and institutional support.

5. Stationing Challenges

The MCSA stationing system has historically disadvantaged women ministers. Some Circuits are reluctant to receive women clergy, making placements difficult and limiting opportunities for growth and career development.

Some circuits explicitly state that they do not want a female minister during stationing processes. As a result, women ministers are rarely stationed through invitation and are more commonly placed through Conference appointment.

1.2 District Level Challenges

At District level, challenges are primarily structural and procedural. The District Executive Committee (DEC) and Stationing Committees possess significant power to either open or close doors for women in ministry. These barriers are often less visible, but far more consequential.

1. Appointments and Assignments

District Stationing Committees often assign women ministers to smaller, struggling, or under-resourced congregations—a phenomenon commonly referred to as the "glass cliff."

There is also implicit bias within appointment processes, where male candidates are preferred for flagship or growing congregations. A lack of transparency in stationing decisions makes it difficult to identify and challenge gender-based patterns.

The Manyano provides another example. Women ministers are expected to wear the Manyano uniform, and Presidents wear capes as a marker of identity and office. Ironically, everyone involved remains part of the laity except the women ministers themselves. I believe this practice is often encouraged by male ministers, who remain custodians of Manyano structures.

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2. Governance and Structural Barriers

District Conference and other committee structures are still largely dominated by men, limiting women's voices within decision-making spaces.

There are inadequate feedback mechanisms through which women ministers can report discriminatory stationing experiences. Promotion pathways, such as becoming a Superintendent Minister, often require congregational seniority that women disproportionately lack because they are denied opportunities in larger or influential Circuits.

There is also an absence of District-level policies designed to protect women against unfair treatment in appointment and leadership processes.

3. Mentorship and Development

Many women ministers continue to experience isolation and inadequate mentorship. There are few formal mentorship programmes that intentionally pair aspiring women ministers with experienced Church leaders.

The limited number of women in senior leadership positions, including Superintendent Minister roles and other Connexional leadership structures, reduces access to female mentors. Consequently, younger women entering ministry often struggle to find role models, guidance, and institutional support.

1.3 Connexional Level Challenges

At the Connexional level, challenges are doctrinal, legislative, and systemic. The policies, theological positions, and institutional frameworks established by Conference shape the environment within which women either flourish or remain constrained across the entire denomination.

Possible Solutions

As a medical doctor, I will draw on an image I understand well: that of a premature baby.

The "premature baby" analogy works effectively here. A premature baby is alive and valuable, but not yet ready to thrive independently within a normal environment. In ministry leadership, the goal is to grow into maturity so that one leads from strength rather than merely from survival mode.

Here is how women in ministry can move beyond "premature" patterns into mature leadership:

1. Get Off Spiritual Life Support and Build Your Own Foundation

Premature babies rely on machines for breathing and feeding. In leadership, this can look like overdependence on someone else's faith or voice.

If you only preach what your male minister or mentor has given you, you remain dependent. Develop a consistent personal rhythm of Scripture reading, prayer, theological reflection, and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit. Maturity comes when you can hear God for yourself and lead from that conviction, even when no one is holding your hand.

2. Develop Stamina and Resilience

Premature babies tire easily and require frequent support. Immature leaders may also burn out quickly, become defensive under criticism, or withdraw when leadership becomes difficult.

Signs of this include quitting at the first sign of conflict, needing constant affirmation, or taking every critique personally.

Build rhythms of rest, accountability, and exposure to manageable leadership responsibilities in order to strengthen your "leadership muscles." Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs before entrusting them with the leadership of the early Church.

3. Learn to Regulate Under Pressure

Premature babies struggle with irregular breathing and temperature control. In the same way, immature leaders may react emotionally, become controlling, or avoid difficult conversations.

Mature leadership requires remaining calm when challenged, being willing to say, "I do not know, but I will find out," and addressing conflict directly with grace and wisdom.

Ask trusted leaders to identify one area for growth and intentionally work on it.

4. Move from Needing Approval to Serving Purpose

Premature babies require constant monitoring and reassurance. Immature leaders may similarly seek validation, approval, or popularity.

This may appear through changing direction to please everyone, avoiding difficult decisions, or constantly over-explaining oneself.

Anchor your leadership in calling and Scripture rather than approval. Jesus was celebrated by crowds one week and crucified the next. Mature leaders serve the mission of God, not their personal image.

5. Stop Comparing Your Timeline to Others

A premature baby is not necessarily "behind"; it is simply developing on a different timeline. However, remaining permanently in an incubator mindset prevents growth and maturity.

Women in ministry must resist comparing their journeys to others and instead focus on faithful growth within their own calling and context.

6. Build Healthy Interdependence, Not Isolation

Premature babies require a NICU team. Mature leaders also require support systems, but the difference is that they contribute to the team rather than simply consuming from it.

Maturity is not determined by age, gender, or years in ministry. It is reflected in the movement from dependence to interdependence—the ability to carry responsibility without collapsing under pressure or controlling others.

God does not call women in ministry to remain in the incubator. God calls women to lead with both the authority and gentleness of Christ, and God provides grace for the process of growth and maturity.



WOMEN MINISTERS CELEBRATED BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT HESWA SYNOD 2026

My name is Lani Maroleni, and I have the honour of serving as the Children and Youth Pastor at Northfield Society in the Benoni Circuit 1007.

Today, I stand before you representing the children and youth of the Church.

Before I say anything else, I want to express my sincere gratitude and humility for being afforded the opportunity to be in this room among such esteemed women of the cloth. It is truly an honour and a privilege to stand before women who have dedicated their lives to the service of God and His people.

As a young person in ministry, I do not take this moment lightly.

To sit among women who have preached the Gospel, shepherded congregations, carried communities through grief, spoken hope into broken spaces, fought battles in prayer, and remained faithful to the call of God through every season, is deeply inspiring.

Many of us young people are here today because women like you chose obedience over comfort.

Because you chose service over recognition.

Because you continued to answer God's call even when the journey was difficult.

So today, before anything else is said, please allow me to say: thank you. Thank you for your ministry. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for making room for generations after you.

Today, I do not come only with a formal speech. I come carrying the voices of little children who learned their first memory verse from you. The voices of teenagers who found safety in your office when life felt overwhelming. The voices of young people who almost gave up on church, on themselves, and even on God—until your ministry reminded them that they were seen, loved, and called.

Today, we say thank you.

I am reminded of the words of Paul in Romans 10:15: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news." Today, we celebrate the beautiful feet of

women who carried the Gospel into churches, homes, hospitals, classrooms, funerals, camps, prisons, and broken places.

Thank you for answering the call of God. Because we know it was not always easy.

Many of you answered God's call in spaces where your voice was questioned before your sermon was even heard. Some of you entered rooms where people debated your calling instead of celebrating it. Some of you had to work twice as hard to prove what God had already spoken over your life. Some of you carried ministry, family responsibilities, criticism, emotional burdens, and exhaustion all at once.

Yet you stayed. You kept preaching. You kept praying. You kept leading. You kept loving. You kept showing up. And because you stayed, generations after you have hope.

Galatians 6:9 says: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Today, we honour you because you did not give up.

As children and youth, we want you to know something: your ministry matters more than you may ever fully realise. You may think the sermon was forgotten. But somewhere, a young person still remembers the sentence that carried them through depression. You may think nobody noticed your consistency. But somewhere, a child still remembers how you greeted them every Sunday by name. You may think your labour went unseen. But somewhere, there is a young adult serving God today because you once believed in them when they did not believe in themselves.

That is ministry. Sometimes ministry is not only found in pulpits. Sometimes it is found in hugs after services. In late-night phone calls. In sitting beside a crying teenager. In praying for matric students before exams. In visiting sick children. In comforting young people after heartbreak. In advocating for those who felt excluded. In creating spaces where young people felt safe enough to ask difficult questions. And ordained women ministers have done this beautifully. You have mothered generations spiritually.

Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 2:7: "Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you." Many of you have carried this heart in ministry. Not because every one of you has biological children—but because nurturing is part of your calling.

You have taught us that strength and gentleness can exist together. You have taught us that leadership does not need arrogance. You have taught us that compassion is not weakness. You have taught us that holiness and humanity can walk hand in hand.

For many children and young girls in our churches, seeing a woman in ordained ministry changed everything. Because representation matters. When little girls see women preach, lead communion, baptise, lead societies, lead Circuits, and shepherd congregations, they begin to understand something powerful: God calls women too.

Joel 2:28 reminds us: "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy." Not only sons. Daughters too. And when young boys grow up under the leadership of women ministers, they learn something equally important: Women are worthy of honour, respect, and spiritual authority. Your ministry has not only shaped the church of today—it is shaping the church of tomorrow. You are raising future ministers. Future worship leaders. Future theologians. Future missionaries. Future leaders. Future mothers and fathers of faith. And we need you to know: the seeds you plant in children and youth are not wasted.

Isaiah 55:11 says: "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire." Every Bible lesson. Every prayer. Every sermon. Every word of encouragement. Every act of kindness. None of it is wasted.

The world we are growing up in is complicated. Young people today are carrying anxiety, confusion, loneliness, identity struggles, family instability, addiction, pressure, and fear at levels many generations never experienced in the same way. Children are growing up too quickly. Teenagers are searching for belonging in dangerous places. Many young people are silently asking: "Does God still see me?" "Do I matter?"

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"Is there still hope for me?" And in the middle of all of this, God has used you. Used your voice. Used your prayers. Used your wisdom. Used your courage. Used your presence.

Sometimes we do not say it enough, but many of us survived because the Church had women who cared deeply. Women who refused to let us disappear. Women who checked in. Women who encouraged us. Women who corrected us with love. Women who reminded us that failure was never the end of our story.

Today, we honour that ministry. We honour the sacrifices nobody saw. The sermons prepared while tired. The tears cried in private. The criticism endured quietly. The moments you felt inadequate but still stood behind the pulpit anyway. The times you poured into others while feeling empty yourself.

And today, we also want to encourage you. Because sometimes the encouragers need encouragement too. So to every ordained woman minister: Please do not grow weary in doing good. The impact of your ministry is eternal.

1 Corinthians 15:58 says: "Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." There are young people watching you survive difficult seasons with dignity, and they are learning perseverance. There are girls watching you preach boldly, and they are learning confidence. There are boys watching you lead faithfully, and they are learning respect. There are children watching how you love Jesus, and they are learning what faith looks like. Even when you feel unseen, heaven sees you.

Hebrews 6:10 says: "God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people." Even when people minimise your contribution, God honours your obedience. Even when ministry becomes heavy, remember: you were called by God, not by human approval. God knew exactly what the Church would need in this generation. And part of His answer was you. Not an accident. Not a backup plan. Not a compromise. A calling.

In Scripture, we see again and again how God used women powerfully.

He used Deborah to lead. He used Esther to save a nation. He used Mary to carry the Saviour. He used the woman at the well to evangelise a community. He used Priscilla to teach. He used Lydia to support the early Church. And today, He continues to use ordained women ministers in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, to transform lives. You are part of that legacy. And as the children and youth of the Church, we want to say: We are grateful for you. Thank you for every youth camp. Every confirmation class. Every children's sermon. Every Friday night youth programme. Every prayer meeting. Every campfire devotion. Every school visit. Every counselling session. Every birthday message. Every moment you made young people feel important.

Thank you for seeing potential in us before we saw it in ourselves. Thank you for creating spaces where children and youth feel welcomed and not merely tolerated.

Jesus said in Matthew 19:14: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Thank you for helping children come to Jesus. Thank you for reminding us that Church

is not only for adults. That we too belong in the body of Christ. That our voices matter. That our gifts matter. That our faith matters.

And today, we also make a promise to you. We promise not to take your labour for granted. We promise to honour and support women in ministry. We promise to continue building churches where girls and boys can grow knowing that God uses all people for His glory. We promise to carry forward the values you have taught us: faithfulness, compassion, justice, holiness, courage, and love.

As I close, I want to leave you with this encouragement from Isaiah 40:31: "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint." Your ministry is changing lives in ways you may never fully know on this side of eternity. One day, I believe many people will come to you and say: "Thank you for not giving up." "Thank you for preaching." "Thank you for praying." "Thank you for believing in me." "Thank you for answering God's call."

So, ordained women ministers of the Church: keep preaching. Keep serving. Keep leading. Keep loving. Keep standing. Keep believing. Because the children and youth of the church are watching—and because of your example, many of us now believe that we too can answer God's call boldly. May God strengthen you. May God refresh you. May God protect your hearts. May God renew your joy. And may He remind you daily that your labour in the Lord is never in vain.

On behalf of the children and youth of the Church: we honour you, we celebrate you, and we thank God for you.

God bless you all.



AFRICA METHODIST COUNCIL STATEMENT

The Africa Methodist Council Heads of Conferences Summit Statement issued on May 16, 2026 after the Heads of Conferences Summit held from 13-17 May 2026 in Lomo Togo.

The Africa Methodist Council (AMC), a Pan-African association of Methodists, Wesleyan, and related Uniting and United Churches, which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, met for the Heads of Conferences Summit in Lomo, Togo from 13-17 May 2026 under the theme “Called to Transform the Sociopolitical and Economic Landscape of Africa.”

This statement crafted by the 55 delegates from 13 African countries and partner organisations emanated from the Summit deliberations.

We give thanks to Almighty God for His grace, guidance, and sustaining presence throughout our deliberations. We express deep appreciation to the Methodist Church of Togo, the Government and people of Togo, and all partners who contributed to the success of this historic gathering.

The Summit deliberations centered on youth development, migration issues, and the underutilisation of technology for mission and service, which pose significant challenges to Africa’s socioeconomic development. We also recognise the growing realities of poverty, corruption, armed conflict, unconstitutional changes of government, insecurity, religious extremism, environmental degradation, gender injustice, moral decline, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

The Summit therefore declares that the Church in Africa cannot remain silent while the dignity of God’s people is threatened. The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls the Church not only to preach salvation but also to stand prophetically for justice, peace, truth, and holistic human dignity.

The deliberations celebrated the impact of Methodism in Africa in areas of healthcare, education infrastructure,

spiritual and ecclesiastical development. As leaders we therefore agreed to the following:

Call to Action:

1. We commit to becoming a prophetic voice against injustice, inequality, corruption, violence, exploitation, moral decay, and nurturing principled leaders who will transform society.
2. We commit ourselves to shaping value-driven young people through service initiatives, mentorship, entrepreneurship clubs, leadership camps, digital learning platforms, and peer accountability systems that nurture integrity, discipline, and purpose.
3. We commit ourselves to move from analogue ministry to digital mission, embracing technology and innovation as tools for evangelism, advocacy, education, discipleship, and transformative impact in an increasingly connected world.
4. We commit to gender inclusivity and the promotion of women’s leadership in Africa.
5. We commit to moving from dependence to sustainability by promoting entrepreneurship, financial literacy, job creation, and economic inclusion that restore dignity and empower communities.
6. We commit to protect creation through eco-justice, environmental stewardship, and sustainability as our collective responsibility to future generations.
7. We commit to exploring ways to deepen our bond of fellowship by embracing unity, diversity, and inclusion.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that the Church’s mission is both spiritual and social and that the transforming power of the Gospel must touch every dimension of human life. The Church must, therefore, rise with courage, wisdom, and prophetic conviction to help shape a continent that is characterised by justice, peace, integrity, and shared prosperity.



YOUTH LEADERS EQUIPPED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE MISSION IN ESWATINI

The Children and Youth Unit of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) continues to strengthen leadership development across the Connexion through its ongoing Leadership Capacity Building Programme for Children and Youth leaders in the Mission Synods. Following successful engagements in Mozambique and Lesotho, the third phase of the programme recently gathered leaders from the Kingdom of Eswatini Mission Synod for a weekend of learning, worship, reflection, and empowerment.

Hosted by Central Eswatini Circuit 1026 at St Paul's Society in Manzini, the seminar brought together more than eighty young leaders from across Eswatini. Participants included Circuit and Society Stewards under the age of 35, Class Leaders, Children's Ministry practitioners, Methodist students from the University of Eswatini, and members of the Wesley Guild.

The gathering opened in a spirit of vibrant praise and worship, setting the tone for a weekend deeply rooted in faith and mission. In his welcoming devotions, the Circuit Superintendent Minister, Rev N. Ncombo, encouraged participants to remain firmly rooted in Christ as they serve and lead within their communities. He reminded them of the paradox of Christian leadership — leadership that is both humble and courageous, servant-hearted yet transformative.

A contextual analysis of the Kingdom of Eswatini was presented by Bulelani Matsebula, who outlined the socio-economic and political realities affecting the wellbeing of children and youth in the country. Among the challenges highlighted were spiritual and moral decline, a lack of ethical leadership, high HIV and AIDS infection rates among young people, unemployment, poverty, child-headed households, limited access to quality education, a struggling healthcare system, gender-based violence and femicide, as well as political instability.

Matsebula noted that the Church in Eswatini is called to minister within this reality and must continue seeking transformative and missional responses that dismantle ongoing injustices and restore dignity to communities.

Rev Koekoe, Director of the Children and Youth Unit, led a powerful session on Transformative Leadership Approaches in a Wesleyan Context. He unpacked the meaning and principles of Christian leadership while exploring spiritual, ethical, innovative, and missional leadership approaches.

He challenged participants to embody Christ-like values in their leadership by leading with love, compassion, integrity, courage, commitment, and vision. He reminded the young leaders that Christian leadership must be progressive rather

than destructive, creating meaningful change in both Church and society.

"They must reclaim their rightful place in the Church and community by being available, willing and able leaders," he emphasised.

Day two of the seminar began with inspiring worship led by Rev Thami Ntuli, District MCYU Coordinator, who reflected on 1 Samuel 17:37–40. He encouraged participants to remember who they are in Christ and to embody noble character and values that reflect Christlikeness in all aspects of their lives.

A series of practical and empowering presentations followed throughout the day.

Zizopho Kelly Cata shared insightful strategies on revitalising the Methodist presence and witness within institutions of higher learning across Eswatini. Drawing on the Wesleyan call to mission, she reminded participants that Methodists are called "to go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most."

She highlighted the urgent need for renewed ministry among students facing challenges such as academic funding shortages, food insecurity, and lack of accommodation. Participants were encouraged to strengthen initiatives such as the Ready to Help Campaign, Feed a Student programmes, food banks, mentorship initiatives, leadership development, and faith formation programmes.

Sivuyile Giba presented on the governance structures and operational guidelines of the Methodist Children and Youth Unit (MCYU), outlining its strategic objectives, areas of responsibility, and focus areas. He stressed the importance of coordination and alignment across all youth leadership structures within the MCSA, ensuring that the voices of children and youth are represented in the decision-making structures of the Church.

Palesa Haas led a session on human advancement and economic empowerment for sustainable youth development. She reminded participants that young people make up a significant portion of the Connexion's population and that empowering youth economically is essential for broader socio-economic transformation.

She also introduced opportunities available through MCSA initiatives such as the Youth Economic Empowerment Fund and Tsietsi Mashinini programmes, encouraging young Methodists to utilise these opportunities for their personal and professional growth.

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Refilwe Matsidiso focused on transformative approaches to children's faith formation, emphasising the need for continuous learning and development among those ministering to children and teenagers. She encouraged Children's Ministry practitioners to embrace relational and experiential ministry approaches while making use of digital technology and innovative methods to remain effective in rapidly changing contexts.

Practical skills shared included storytelling techniques, lesson preparation, and ministry approaches suitable for resource-constrained environments.

Bulelani Matsebula also facilitated discussions on revitalising the Wesley Guild within Eswatini so that it can once again become a dynamic and vibrant missionary movement that impacts young people holistically.

One of the most moving moments of the seminar came at the conclusion of the programme with the launch of the Students Food Bank initiative. Food groceries valued at E7,000 were donated to support students facing food insecurity at universities and colleges across Eswatini. In addition, twenty students received food relief vouchers worth E700 each.

The Central Eswatini Circuit, which provides pastoral oversight to students and staff at the University of Eswatini, warmly welcomed the support, which will strengthen ongoing food relief efforts among students.

The seminar demonstrated the Methodist Church's continued commitment to empowering young leaders who are spiritually grounded, socially conscious, and equipped to respond to the realities facing their communities.

Sengatsi Nkulunkulu angabusisa bantfu bakaNgwane.



HESWA CHOIR SHARES SONG, FAITH, AND FELLOWSHIP AT INTERNATIONAL GOSPEL FESTIVAL IN GERMANY

The Highveld and Eswatini District (HESWA) Choir has safely returned home to South Africa following a deeply meaningful and transformative journey to Stuttgart, Germany, where they participated in the One World Choir Summit and the European Gospel Festival 2026.

Under the direction of Mr Armstrong Masiane, the choir represented South Africa in a remarkable international gathering that celebrated music, faith, justice, and cultural exchange. The invitation, preparations, and eventual journey were months in the making and required extraordinary commitment, sacrifice, and faith.

Reflecting on the experience, choir members shared that the journey was marked by moments of uncertainty and perseverance. Questions about funding, travel logistics, rising airfares amid conflict in the Middle East, and the demanding preparation schedule often tested the resolve of the group. Yet, through prayer, teamwork, and determination, the choir was able to embark on the journey.

Intensive Preparation and Visa Challenges

Preparation for the tour included four intensive Saturday rehearsals, bringing together choir members travelling from across a 150-kilometre radius. Organising rehearsal venues,

transport, and meals required significant coordination and support from churches, families, and donors.

Alongside the musical preparations came the demanding visa application process. Regular planning meetings were held with partners including the United Evangelical Mission (VEM), the United Methodist Church (UMC) World Mission, and the organising team in Tübingen.

The visa process proved especially difficult and emotionally taxing. Increasing restrictions on tourist visas for young people created significant obstacles, despite the involvement and endorsement of church organisations. Sadly, three choir members were denied visas, despite repeated attempts and resubmissions of applications.

The choir reflected on the painful reality that behind every visa application is a person carrying hopes, dreams, and a longing for connection and cultural exchange. The absence of the affected singers deeply impacted the emotional atmosphere of the choir and raised broader questions around justice, equality, and freedom of movement in today's world.

Warm Welcome in Tübingen

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Despite the emotional challenges leading up to departure, the choir arrived safely in Tübingen, Germany, where they received a warm and heartfelt welcome from the Off-beat Gospel Choir, Karoline Würth of Methodist World Mission, and Matthias Althöfer, pastor of the Methodist Church in Tübingen.

The first few days allowed choir members to settle in, rehearse, and connect with host families and local congregations. A workshop gathering held on Tuesday evening created space for fellowship, worship, and meaningful relationships that participants say will remain with them for years to come.

A Global Celebration of Music and Justice

From Tübingen, the choir travelled to Stuttgart for the inaugural One World Choir Summit, hosted as a prelude to the European Gospel Festival.

The summit brought together choirs from Tanzania, Rwanda, Indonesia, and South Africa in a powerful celebration of diversity, unity, and shared faith. Through music and storytelling, participants exchanged traditions and experiences, discovering the unique beauty of each culture represented.

A keynote address by Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, titled “Music Colors the World: Empowerment for Peace and Justice,” highlighted the power of music to transcend boundaries and inspire reconciliation and hope.

One of the defining moments of the summit was the joint concert on Thursday evening, where the international choirs united in song before an enthusiastic audience.

Joining 6,000 Voices at the European Gospel Festival

From Friday to Sunday, the Heswa Choir joined approximately 6,000 participants at the European Gospel Festival, immersing themselves in a vibrant atmosphere of worship, music, and fellowship.

The choir participated in the grand opening at the Porsche Arena before performing twice at the Hospitalhof in Stuttgart. Between performances, members enjoyed moments of exploration and reflection, including climbing the Hospital Church tower to view the city skyline.

Throughout the festival, the choir formed new friendships and connections with people from across the world, sharing not only music but also stories of faith, resilience, and community.

Before departing for South Africa, the choir gathered with friends and hosts at the Methodist Church in Bad Cannstatt for a final time of reflection, fellowship, and thanksgiving over a shared meal.

A Journey Made Possible Through Partnership

The choir expressed deep gratitude to the many individuals, churches, and organisations whose support made the journey possible.

Special thanks were extended to Andreas Malessa for the initial invitation and encouragement; the Creative Church and the VEM, especially Jörg Spitzer, for planning and financial support; Methodist communities in Germany for their generous donations towards flights; and the EmK Weltmission for coordination and support through Karoline Würth.

The choir also thanked the Off-beat Gospel Choir in Tübingen for their hospitality, as well as St Paul’s Methodist Church in Katlehong, Mondeor Methodist Church, and the Methodist Churches in Tübingen and Bad Cannstatt for opening their doors and supporting rehearsals and fellowship gatherings.

Gratitude was also expressed to the families, donors, and supporters in South Africa whose contributions sustained the choir throughout the preparation process.

Above all, the choir gave thanks to God for protection, strength during moments of doubt, and the opportunity to experience once again the unifying power of music.

As the choir reflected on the journey, one message stood out clearly: music has the power to transcend borders, allowing people to truly see, hear, and walk alongside one another in faith and humanity.

“Two are better than one, because together they can do more. If one of them falls, the other will help him up.” — Ecclesiastes 4:9–10



SANIBONANI: A Christian Fascist or a Christ Follower

By Rev. Mike Vorster



Hey, hey, how do we get out of this hamster mentality that goes round and round and ends up in the same saw dust each time? Saw dust, that if not cleaned becomes filled with urine and faeces.

We never learn from history as humanity.

Yester year we faced fascism in European countries, mainly in Germany and Italy. Nazism under Hitler's Germany had, as his goal, world domination. I think Hitler is pleased with what is happening today. We are witnessing the rise of neo-Nazism in this 21st unenlightened era. Among many other abominations that fascism wants, is to get rid of women leadership and subdue women as they were in previous centuries.

I am not going to mention who they are in our country or anywhere else in the world. I leave that to you to decide.

I know that should I call out the organisation which is spearheading fascism in South Africa—one will land up in the court accused of defamation. They are masters at engaging in "Law-Fare" with any of their detractors within the public sphere.

As Church, we should counter fascism because it runs through some of the veins of the Church. In my observation and opinion, the MCSA is not above this practise either.

The millions who fought against fascism and died under Hitler and Mussolini must be turning in their graves. They fought against fascism and today, many of this generation are birthing neo-fascism.

An estimated 1,5 million allied military deaths and 1,3 million Soviet deaths. Were these deaths for nothing?

Let's not forget that Nazi Germany discriminated against and persecuted people on the basis of their race or ethnicity (actual or perceived), religious affiliation, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and, where applicable, mental or physical disabilities.

Discrimination was institutionalised through legislation under the Nazi Party and perpetrated at an industrial scale, culminating in the Holocaust.

The vast majority of the Nazi regime's victims were Jewish, Romani, or Slavic. Jews, along with some Romani populations, were deemed unfit for

society on racial or ethnic grounds and largely confined to ghettos, then rounded up and deported to concentration or extermination camp. This also included LGBTQIA+, Afro-German called "Rhinehold Bastards". Any group that was not considered part of the Aryan race were targets of extermination.

Taking into account all of the victims of persecution, the Nazis systematically murdered an estimated six million Jews and millions of others during the war.

Donald Niewyk suggests that the broadest definition, including Soviet civilian deaths, would produce a total of 17 million victims.

Despite widely varying treatment (some groups were actively targeted for genocide while others were not), some died in concentration camps such as Dachau and others from various forms of Nazi brutality. According to extensive documentation (written and photographic) left by the Nazis, eyewitness testimony by survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders, and records of the occupied countries, most perished in death camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau.

I have visited the Buchenwald concentration camp, in East Germany and saw human depravity at its hellish manifestation. In an office previously occupied by an SS officer I saw lampshades made of human skin—I will spare you of any of the other horrors I saw.

Let us remember these were intelligent people who were able to build rockets and build spectacular auto-Bahn's (Highways) which are still in use today.

I can only conclude that one can have a high IQ but low EQ: Emotional intelligence and SE: Spiritual and moral intelligence.

Does this remind you of any contemporary nations and rulers?

We, the people, are lost.

Ours is a goal which has Jesus as the centre drawing all to Godself.

But what is a fascist and what are the fruits of fascism?

"In 1991, British historian Roger Griffin proposed an alternative definition of fascism. He said fascism is a form of revolutionary nationalism hinged on the

unity of a group to achieve a national rebirth (or palingenesis, Koine Greek: παλιγγενεσία), often by mistreating ethnic minorities.

In 2003, Laurence W. Britt wrote the 14 Defining Characteristics of Fascism: (I would encourage you to Google search Mussolini, the father of fascism which Hitler emulated).

The fruits of Fascism:

1. Fake elections
2. Serious sexism
3. Serious homophobia
4. Controlled mass media
5. Power of corporations protected
6. Obsession with national security
7. Rampant cronyism and corruption
8. Religion and ruling elites tied together
9. Obsession with crime and punishment
10. Power of labour suppressed or eliminated
11. Disdain for the importance of human rights
12. The supremacy of the military or avid militarism
13. Powerful and continuous expressions of nationalism
14. Disdain and suppression of intellectuals and the arts
15. Identification of enemies or scapegoats to unite the population behind the rule

- Tick which of these criteria applies to governments today? Name them.
- Tick which of these applies to the MCSA? Name where they are manifest.
- Tick which of these apply to your family?

Then ask yourself honestly, am I a fascist Christian or a Christ follower?

Whose fruits am I bearing?

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

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But the fruit of the spirit of fascism are: Hate, disdain for human rights, discrimination of anyone who is not like them, selfishness, sexism, racism, homophobia, law and order over justice and all things that are anti-Christ

clothed in a veneer of Christian religiosity.

What fruit are you bearing? Ask God to reveal this to you.

How do we get liberated from the stench within the hamster's cage, or are

we content to go round and round and get nowhere?

Choose wisely.

(I am indebted to google search for the information)

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF THE CHURCH DURING ELECTION SEASON

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



The Church of God must promote and affirm God's invitation for God's people to participate in the governance of society according to God's will. "Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you" (Deuteronomy 1:13). The lesson we draw from this scripture is that the election of leaders should be a deliberate process grounded in wisdom, understanding, and respect.

Prayer sessions for elections and the preparations surrounding them are therefore vital in seeking divine guidance in the selection of ethical leadership.

The Church remains committed to ensuring that the people of God are governed by credible, God-fearing, and patriotic leaders.

The right to choose those who govern us is not only a constitutional right, but also a sacred responsibility and a God-given mandate.

Church leaders and congregations should be encouraged to educate the people of God on how and why they should participate in elections. Authentic voter education must be promoted within churches, empowering people with information on how to register to vote, how to cast their vote, where to vote, and how to handle a ballot paper. Critically, the vote must remain the secret of every voter. Our churches should also be encouraged to share non-partisan voting guides with congregants and community members.

Leaders must reflect the people they lead. Members of the Church, as members of the wider community, should play a role in influencing the political landscape without becoming partisan.

The reality of the upcoming municipal elections calls on us, through church leadership, to encourage people to participate responsibly and prayerfully, guided by God.

The Church of God exists as a witness to God's justice, working towards just governance and effective service delivery.

One of the responsibilities given to humanity is to be co-workers with God in making the world a better place and advancing the will of God. "May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

This part of the prayer invites us to offer ourselves as doers of God's will, asking God to guide, lead, and equip us to accomplish divine purposes.

From the beginning, God demonstrated a willingness to work through humanity to fulfil God's mission on earth, as recorded in the book of Genesis: "Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

Churches should take note that it is not advisable to invite or allow political candidates to speak during worship services. Not only could this compromise the Church's non-partisan witness and, in some contexts, its tax-exempt status, but it may also shift the focus away from the worship of God towards political campaigning.

Church leaders should not endorse political candidates on behalf of their congregations. Instead, we should speak about the moral and ethical qualities required of leaders in our communities and society. Failure to place God at the centre of our preparations for elections could easily lead to corruption, poor service delivery, and moral decay.

The role of the Church must not be confused when it comes to elections within our communities.

Leadership and governance must always be understood as a shared responsibility, organised in an orderly manner to serve the people of God.



HAPPY AFRICA DAY!

— By Rev. Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu

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



Today I celebrate a continent that has never stopped carrying the presence of God, even when empire tried to convince her otherwise. And that leads me to reflect again on the Holy Spirit, and on why some people become so uncomfortable when I refer to the Spirit as “She”. Others immediately rush to correct me, as though God can be neatly contained inside human grammar, culture, and certainty. Yet scripture itself resists such confinement.

I do not claim to be a biblical scholar, but the more I study theology, the more I see how much our language about God has been shaped by culture, power, history, and tradition, and not by doctrine alone.

In Genesis 1:2, before creation took form, “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (NRSV). The Hebrew word is “ruach,” grammatically feminine.

By the time the New Testament is written in Greek, the Spirit becomes “pneuma,” grammatically neuter. That linguistic shift across two testaments, far from settling anything, only underscores the point: God refuses to be contained by any single grammar. The Spirit appears at the very beginning of life, moving over chaos with imagery that carries something profoundly maternal, life-giving, sustaining, generative.

This matters to me, particularly as an African woman theologian shaped by histories where both Africa and women have too often been treated as peripheral to “serious” theology, while carrying immense spiritual wisdom, memory, endurance, resistance, song, prayer, and life.

Romans 8:26 stays with me: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” The Spirit groans with us. Carries what we cannot carry alone. Meets humanity in vulnerability rather than demanding strength from us first. That is not the language of dominance or control. It is the language of presence, accompaniment, and care, and those qualities have too often been dismissed as feminine, as lesser, as peripheral to the real business of God. Scripture refuses that dismissal.

In Proverbs 8, Wisdom cries out publicly. She builds, nourishes, warns, teaches, guides. In Greek, Wisdom becomes Sophia, and many theologians have understood Sophia as a name for the Spirit, not because God can be reduced to gender, but because no single gendered framework can contain the fullness of divine wisdom.

Julian of Norwich understood this clearly. When she wrote “As truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother,” she was not being poetic for effect. She was insisting that the fullness of God cannot be captured by one half of human experience alone.

Jürgen Moltmann, writing centuries later, called the Spirit “the divine energy of life,” life understood as generative, relational, and boundless rather than fixed, hierarchical, and controlled.

The resistance people have toward feminine language for the Spirit says more about us than it does about God.

Jacqueline Grant wrote that Black women have often existed “in the wilderness of theology,” present in the Church, absent from its dominant imagination. I feel the truth of that deeply, because it names something precise: the gap between who carries the spiritual life of a community and who is permitted to

define it. Across African and diasporic traditions, women have carried wisdom, prayer, resistance, memory, and the living presence of God in ways that no institution could erase, even when those institutions refused to see it.

Womanist and postcolonial theologians have done the careful work of exposing what so-called universal theology has too often been: patriarchy dressed in doctrinal language, empire wearing the robes of orthodoxy. That is not a neutral theological inheritance. It is a shaped one, shaped by culture, power, and the long assumption that masculinity reflects God most accurately.

So, when I speak of the Holy Spirit as “she,” I am not trying to be fashionable or provocative. I am resisting the shrinking of God into exclusively male language and male imagination. I am insisting that women, too, bear the image of God, and that African spiritual wisdom, memory, and ways of knowing are not marginal to the story of God’s movement in the world. I am acknowledging a hidden continuity, insisting that God has always been present among those history tried to make invisible, and that our theological language should be honest enough to say so.

The Spirit cannot be controlled by empire, patriarchy, or inherited certainty.

“The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.” (John 3:8)

And let us be clear: God was alive in Africa long before the Bible became a Christian text of colonial authority. African peoples did not meet God for the first time when missionaries arrived with scripture in one hand and empire in the other. They were already in relationship with the divine, already naming God, already carrying sacred wisdom, already living inside a covenant with the living Spirit. John Mbiti understood this. Bolaji Idowu understood this. The Yoruba knew Olodumare. The Akan knew “Nyame.” The Shona knew “Mwari.”

These were not primitive approximations waiting to be corrected by Western theology. They were encounters with the same God, the same Spirit, the same hovering presence that moved over the waters at the beginning of all things.

So, when Africa speaks about the Spirit, she does not speak as a student of someone else’s tradition. She speaks as a witness.

And maybe Africa understands something about the Spirit that institutional Christianity has sometimes forgotten: that the Spirit is living, moving, dancing, groaning, liberating, creating, sustaining life in the midst of struggle. The Spirit has always been present in the songs sung under oppression, the prayers carried across the Middle Passage, the wisdom kept alive in communities that empire tried to silence. That is not peripheral to Christian theology. That is Christian theology.

The Holy Spirit is mystery, breath, fire, comforter, advocate, disturber, and giver of life. She has always been present among the people history forgot to count.

And she still hovers over chaos.

DLAMINI, MARGARET PHETFWAYINI: The first Swazi woman to be ordained

— By Prof. Rev. Simangaliso Kumalo



My son, as a Swati, I have had to learn to bring my culture which is extremely patriarchal, my faith as a Methodist which is ambiguous at times, and my ordination which progressed, into constructive synergy for me to be able to work well with my people.



Margaret Phetfwayini Dlamini was born on 24 December 1940 at Mpofo, Swaziland. Her parents were John Masiligwane and Mafanisa Khoza (neé Shongwe). From the local school, she went to William Pitcher Teacher Training College, where she attained her teacher's qualification. She taught for many years. She was married to Evangelist Nehemiah Mbuyiswa Dlamini, a well-known and respected Methodist evangelist in the South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland District. They had six children. She was a born leader, who held a number of positions both in church and society. She was elected chairperson of the women's wing of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT). For a long time, she served as a Commissioner of the Swaziland Teaching Service Commission.

She also felt a call to local preaching in the Church. She enrolled and became a full local preacher. She was then appointed as principal of Khalakahle Primary School, one of the Methodist schools in Swaziland, where she served with excellence. Whilst principal, she started Ka Langa High School in the premises of her school. It became a fully-fledged high school, adding to the number of Methodist Schools in Swaziland. There she also felt an intense calling to the ordained Methodist ministry. She retired from teaching to offer herself for the ministry.

First, she worked at Central Swaziland Circuit, at the Siteki section. Then she was promoted to be Superintendent of

the Mahamba Circuit. She rebuilt the Circuit that was on the verge of collapsing due to lack of resources. Being a highly gifted preacher and spiritual leader, she brought new life to the Circuit which saw it grow numerically, spiritually, and financially. It was due to her hard work that a new church was built through donations from overseas, the old church was refurbished and received national monument status from government. She also developed the Gorge Tourist Attraction Center, within the mission precinct.

It took Swaziland 30 years to produce a woman minister after the Methodist Church had opened the door to the ordination of woman. This is because of the entrenched patriarchy in that society. The breakthrough came through the calling of Rev. Margaret Phetfwayini Dlamini, who at an advanced age, resigned her position as a school principal and offered for the

ministry. No women minister would have been able to change the patriarchal attitudes by serving as a minister better than her, who as a Swazi, was able to break the tradition with sensitivity and caution which led to the acceptance of women as ministers in Swaziland.

She had to endure lots of discrimination and condescending attitudes from men in the Church, both lay and Clergy. As a highly experienced leader, she was able to guide those who demonstrated chauvinistic attitudes with love, kindness, and a clear appreciation of the cultural dynamics that informed them. Through this mature attitude she laid the foundation for her clergy sisters who followed in her steps.

She is remembered for her powerful sermons and teachings. From now on, the ministry in Swaziland is open for women ministers because of Margaret Dlamini's pioneering work.



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SYNOD 2026 ELECTIONS

Congratulations to those newly elected or re-elected into various positions within the MCSA. We hold each person and their family in prayer at this time. All Bishop nominations await Conference ratification.



Rev. Siyabonga Mazaleni nominated as Bishop of the William Kama District.



Rev. Christopher Gaya re-elected as Bishop of the Namibia District.



Rev. Luxolo Mantini nominated as Bishop for the Natal Coastal District.



Rev. Festus Marumo nominated as Bishop of the Molopo District.



Rev. Siphwe Madi nominated as Bishop of the Limpopo District.



Rev. Zide elected as Vice Chair of the Natal Coastal District.



Rev. Wandile Ndlanzi elected as the Vice Chair in Molopo District.



Rev. Sanda elected as the District Vice Chair of the Mokala-Montle District.



Rev. Ndimiso Ncombo elected as the Highveld and Eswatini District Vice Chair.



Rev. K Carr elected as the William Kama District Vice Chair.



Rev. Craig Bell re-elected as the Central District Synod Secretary.



Mr Abby Olihile Tlaetsi re-elected as the Molopo District Synod Secretary.



Ms Naomi Mosikare elected as the Statistical Secretary of the Molopo District.



Rev. Meloa elected as the new District Secretary elect of the Mokala Montle District.



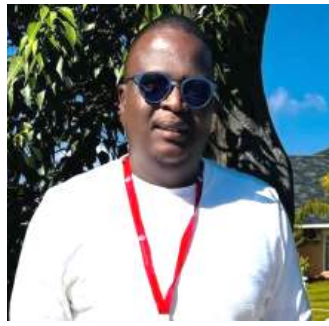
Mr K Zinto re-elected as District Statistical Secretary.



Mrs Neo Mollentze re-elected as the District Lay Leader of the Molopo District.



Mrs C Nontshinga re-elected as District Treasurer.



Mr Baboloki Mothupi re-elected as the District Treasurer of the Molopo District.



Mrs Nelisa Mshengu elected as the Natal Coastal District Treasurer.



Ms Mary Ontibile Kagiso elected as the Mission Coordinator of the Molopo District.



Rev. P Mbombela elected as District Mission Unit Coordinator.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE DESK HONOURS THE ELDERLY

—By *Tebogo Oepeng*
(District Champion – Mokala-Montle District)

The Environmental Justice Desk (EJD) in Mokala-Montle District continued its mission of promoting environmental awareness and community empowerment by honouring one of the elderly members of the Church during a special Mother’s Day celebration held at Seodin Society, Methodist Church, under the stewardship of Rev. Mvula Zenzile.

An 89-year-old mother, Mrs. Matilda Badirwang, was honoured by the District Champion, Tebogo Oepeng, through the gifting and planting of a *Combretum erythrophyllum* (River Bushwillow) tree. The symbolic gesture celebrated not only Mother’s Day, but also Mrs. Badirwang’s lifelong love for nature, gardening, and environmental care.

During the engagement with the Environmental Justice Desk, Mrs. Badirwang reflected on her early school days at the Robert Moffat Missionary School under the London Missionary Society. She shared how the teachings she received during her youth continue to shape her life even today. She proudly recalled that she used to

achieve distinctions because of her outstanding gardening skills and the beauty of her school garden.

Even at the age of 89, Mrs. Badirwang still spends much of her time working in her garden. She grows beans, onions, aloe plants, pepper trees, and a variety of flowers. She explained that during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people visited her garden seeking medicinal plants and natural remedies.

On Mother’s Day, she was affectionately referred to as “Badirwang” because she is the only one among her peers who is still alive today. Speaking passionately about the importance of trees and creation, she referred to the biblical story of Moses and the burning bush—the tree with flames that was not consumed by fire—describing it as a symbol of holiness and God’s powerful creation.

Mrs. Badirwang encouraged church congregants and communities to care for trees and gardens, emphasising the many benefits they provide, including shade, fruit, beauty, and medicinal

value. She further expressed her belief that trees contribute positively to human well-being and spiritual healing.

To conclude the occasion, she joyfully sang a verse from the hymn book:

"Re be joale ka difate, tseo dithlomilweng pele hara metsi. Dinosetseng, ka matsatsi le matsatsi."

Her words and actions served as a powerful reminder that environmental stewardship is deeply connected to faith, heritage, healing, and the preservation of God’s creation for future generations.



MOKALA-MONTLE DISTRICT HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

—By *Tebogo Oepeng*
(*District Champion – Mokala-Montle District*)

The Mokala-Montle District continues to make meaningful strides in responding to environmental challenges through the Environmental Justice Desk. Since the official launch of the programme in March 2026, a total of 116 trees have been distributed and planted across the District.

Mokala-Montle District is one of the largest Districts within the Church, consisting of approximately 320 Societies and 21 praying stations, stretching across four provinces namely the Northern Cape, North West, Free State, and Eastern Cape.

The Environmental Justice Desk continues to distribute and plant trees across different Mission Groups within the District, promoting environmental awareness and sustainable communities. A special milestone was reached during the 75th anniversary celebration of the LPA (Local Preachers Association), where trees were delivered and planted as a symbol of life, growth, and commitment towards caring for God's creation.

During the month of March, District representatives underwent training on Eco-Justice and Environmental Stewardship. This transformative and important initiative is a collaboration between the Connexional Mission Unit and the Ecumenical Movement, with the training facilitated jointly by the Methodist and Anglican Churches.

One of the highlights of the programme took place during the official opening of the Ratau Methodist Church in Thaba Nchu, where the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, planted a tree as a symbol of hope, healing, and restoration of God's creation.

The Presiding Bishop was accompanied by the General Secretary, Rev. Musi Losaba, the Lay President, Mr. Xhanti Mhlabulwane, and the District Bishop, Rev. Lephoi Ntelekoa.

In a memorable moment, the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit, Rev. Chalala Kutoane, named the tree planted by the Presiding Bishop "PUMLA", symbolising peace, growth, resilience, and environmental healing.

Furthermore, through a partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, the District successfully identified 10 vegetable gardens as part of the Food Security Programme. These gardens are intended to benefit not only Methodist Church members, but also neighbouring communities and other denominations, reflecting the true spirit of ecumenism, unity, and social justice.

Why This Matters Now

Southern Africa is already experiencing the painful impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. Communities continue to face:

- Severe droughts affecting food security and water availability.
- Floods and extreme storms destroying homes and infrastructure.
- Rising temperatures and heatwaves threatening health and livelihoods.

These challenges affect vulnerable communities the most, particularly rural communities, women, children, and the poor.

Environmental Justice therefore becomes not only an environmental concern, but also a moral, spiritual, and humanitarian responsibility.

Environmental Justice and Faith Responsibility

For people of faith, caring for creation is part of God's calling and stewardship. The Bible reminds us in Genesis 2:15: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

This scripture reminds believers that humanity was entrusted by God to protect, preserve, and care for creation responsibly.

Psalm 24:1 further declares: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

The Environmental Justice Desk therefore creates a sacred and practical space for the Church to respond faithfully and prophetically to the ecological crisis facing the world today.

Churches have historically played a significant role in promoting justice, transforming communities, and shaping

moral consciousness. Through tree planting initiatives, food security projects, environmental education, and partnerships, the Church continues to demonstrate that faith without action cannot transform society.

As environmental advocate David Orr once said: "When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves."

The Mokala-Montle District remains committed to building greener communities, restoring hope, and protecting God's creation for future generations.

"Planting a tree today is planting hope for tomorrow."



CLARKEBURY DISTRICT 1700 HOLDS HISTORIC FIRST ANNUAL YOUNG MEN'S GUILD CONVENTION

The Young Men's Guild (YMG) of the newly established Clarkebury District 1700 made history with its First Annual District Convention, held from 16–19 April 2026 at Mqhekezweni Circuit under the theme, "Repositioned Disciples Driven by the Holy Spirit" (Isaiah 61:1–2).

The convention marked a significant milestone for the new District and featured the induction of the inaugural District Executive Committee by District Bishop Rev. Sonamzi. Members of the General Committee were also present, demonstrating strong Connexional support for the District's new journey.

Led by District President Rev. Mtapane, the gathering was characterised by vibrant worship, powerful fellowship, and a deep sense of spiritual renewal. A particularly moving rendition of the hymn "Ivangeli elakudala elasikhulula ezonweni" became a highlight of the convention and gained attention on social media, extending the convention's witness beyond the gathering itself.

Living out the convention theme through practical service, YMG members undertook several community outreach initiatives. Professional educators within the Guild conducted Mathematics masterclasses for Grade 12 learners in local schools, while other members visited schools to donate uniforms and toiletries and offer encouragement to learners.

The Guild also extended its ministry to local law enforcement officers through a visit to the Mqhekezweni Police Station,

where members with counselling and social work expertise provided psychosocial support, prayer, and pastoral care.

One of the most impactful initiatives was the Mqhekezweni Family Restoration Project. Members assisted a vulnerable family by cleaning and painting their home and donating groceries. Recognising the unsafe condition of the structure, the convention resolved to build a new house for the family, making the project a lasting legacy of the District's first convention.

The convention also paused to honour faithfulness and service. Tribute was paid to the late Bro. Charles Diko, who had been selected to serve as the first District Recording Secretary. Two veteran members were recognised for their extraordinary commitment to the Guild: Mr. Tofu Empie Timakwe for 69 years of service and Mr. Tennyson Tembekile Msi for 64 years of service.

The convention concluded with the ceremonial handover of hosting responsibilities to Fletcherville Circuit, which will host the 2027 Convention. Accepting the hosting light on behalf of the Circuit was Rev. T.J. Losaba.

Reflecting on the success of the gathering, delegates celebrated not only a time of worship and fellowship but also a convention that demonstrated the Church's commitment to transforming lives through education, pastoral care, and community service. The First Annual Convention of Clarkebury District 1700 truly embodied the Guild's motto: "One Heart, One Way."



ZWELITSHA CENTRAL MISSION PROVIDES UNIFORMS TO NEEDY GIRLS

By TK Sonjica

The Young Women's Manyano (YWM) of the Zwelitsha Central Mission (ZCM) Circuit-312 recently provided school uniforms to three needy girls at a service held at the VGK Ntshinga Society in Zwelitsha. One of the girls is 14 years old from Tshatshu Village doing Grade 7 at Mgcawezulu High at that village. The other two girls who are 11 and 14 years old respectively, from Zone 4 in Zwelitsha, are learners doing grades 5 and 7 at Qaqamba Higher Primary School in Zwelitsha.

The Circuit's Superintendent, Rev. Madodonke Ngwendu, commended the Young Women's Manyano for having identified and provided for the girls. He encouraged them to do more for the vulnerable within the Circuit.

The Circuit Mission Co-ordinator, Nkosinathi Nomoyi called upon all those who can afford to assist the YWM in their efforts to cater for the vulnerable in their communities. He suggested that they could also ask their sons and daughters working in the country's cities, if possible, to adopt girls that are in need.

The Christian Citizenship Secretary (CCS) of the YWM, Phumza Njeza, explained that her organisation at ZCM runs a project named "Adopt A Child" which is currently focused on supporting vulnerable girl children specifically around uplifting them through education. She added that their theme states that, "God is calling us to come out of our gates and operationalise mission work".

She elaborated that their organisation selected three girls from their Circuit's societies who they could assist in their education. "An assessment of their families was conducted and the results of that assessment met our criteria for us to support them. One girl is from Tshatshu Society and two girls are from VGK Ntshinga Society", she said.

In an interview with the guardian of one of the recipients from the Tshatshu Society, Lindiswa Alven, who told the writer that the recipient is her granddaughter whose mother is unemployed. She lamented that the mother has 4 children that she doesn't maintain. "All her children are my

responsibility. I do not know where she is and she doesn't stay with us here in Tshatshu", she said.

She added that the mother gets the R320.00 grant which is provided for the unemployed. The mother had the children while they were still living in Cape Town from different fathers who also have never provided anything for their children.

"I must confirm that I get the grant for three of her children. Initially the grant was paid directly to their mother. But when the Social Workers established that she was misusing the grant they transferred it to me for the benefit of her children".

"I am grateful to the church for giving my grandchild a school uniform. What touches me is that I am not a member of the Methodist Church. Regardless, the Methodists have not discriminated against me and my granddaughter. My prayer is that, if possible, the Methodists will take care of all who, just like me, are in dire straits", Alven concluded.



Rev. Madodonke Ngwendu and Mr Ntsikelelo Ramncwana praying for school uniforms before they were handed over to needy girls at Zwelitsha. Mr Nkosinathi Nomoyi in the background looks on.



Circuit 312 CCS, Phumza Njeza and Circuit 312 Mission Coordinator, Nkosinathi Nomoyi, unpacking school uniforms before they were handed over to needy girls at Zwelitsha.

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Mandisa Sifile
Rev. James Erwin
Rev. Zanele Dyasi

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



SMOKE AND FIRE AWAKEN A LOCAL PREACHER

By TK Sonjica

On a night in March 2026 a Local Preacher and a member of the Young Men's Guild of the Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit 312 of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Ntsikelelo Buti, was woken up at his home in Phakamisa, Qonce from a peaceful sleep by unfamiliar noises. He jumped out of bed to check what was going on and was choked by smoke before reaching the kitchen. The smoke and flames had spread to almost every room and he had to crawl to the kitchen and forced the door open.

Once outside, his neighbours who had just arrived were shouting his name. He emerged in his pyjamas and all his belongs were inside the burning house. Neighbours phoned the fire brigade which, on arrival, extinguished the fire. The following morning the fire brigade had to be called back as the fire in some of the rooms had rekindled.

On that fateful night, Buti was taken to the Grey Hospital in Qonce by a neighbour for observation. He was not injured in the fire. While still at the hospital the following morning, the police arrived, investigating whether the cause of the fire was arson or an accident. At the time of writing, the police had not yet communicated their findings to Buti.

Buti told the writer that, "My house was not insured and there was no way I could lodge a claim. However, as a pensioner, the Buffalo City Municipality has indicated that they are evaluating my case and would indicate later on how they would assist me. Thus far they have provided me with some groceries at a flat in Zone 5, Zwelitsha which I am temporarily occupying".

Further developments with Buti's plight are that after the fire, one of his relatives, Khaya Mekuto, alerted Buti's Church Superintendent, Rev. Madodonke Ngwendu, who announced to his congregants Buti's dilemma. During the Sunday service on 10 May 2026, the Circuit Mission co-ordinator, Nkosinathi Nomoyi, announced that the Mission Group had raised an amount of R10, 000.00 and a collection from the congregants amounting to R3230.00—both amounts totaling to R13 230.00— which would be deposited into Buti's bank account. Added to that Buti, was bought full LPD and YMG uniforms. There were also some other clothing items that the congregants bought for him.

Rev. Ngwendu, when speaking with Buti, said, "Because of your pain, your fellow congregants were affected. In such circumstances, the Lord urged them to assist you". This, he reasoned

was propelled by John 13:34 wherein Jesus told his disciples that, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another".

Rev. Ngwendu commended Mekuto for accommodating Buti when he had no place to stay. He extended the acknowledgement to Mr Derrick Nokhele and his family for currently providing Buti with a flat at Zone 5 in Zwelitsha. He reminded both families that, "A friend in need, is a friend indeed".

To all who have assisted Buti, Rev. Ngwendu extracting from Mathew 25:35 pronounced that, "I was hungry and you fed me".

Buti was grateful to his church, citing Rev. Ngwendu and his class for arranging a healing prayer for him at his home after the fire.

Circuit Steward Siya Ralo, in motivating Buti, quoted Nokuthula Mazibuko and told him that, "Pain must not drown your desire to grow in the things of God and walking with the Holy Spirit. Don't allow yourself to be swallowed by challenges.... God still wants to use you, regardless of what you are going through".



Rev. M Ngwendu blessing uniforms bought by his congregants for Mr N Buti after all his clothing was burnt with his house at Phakamisa in Qonce.



Mr N Buti accepting church uniforms and church clothing bought for him from Circuit Steward S Ralo at a service in Zwelitsha.



The remainder of Mr N Buti's house after it was burnt down by a fire at Phakamisa in Qonce.

IZENZO ZENCEBA – ACTS OF MERCY

While some may imagine that Synod is only about reports, debates, and resolutions, the Kumkani Hintsa District Women's Manyano Executive quietly reminded the church that mercy still has feet, hands, and a warm blanket. Through their Acts of Mercy programme, they demonstrated that mission cannot remain on paper but must find its way into communities where hope is needed most.

The church heard how the Women's Manyano embraced a clear mission focus for the current term: instilling hope and promoting spiritual healing through practical acts of mercy. Mercy was not merely invited as a guest to Synod; it was given a permanent seat at the mission table and placed at the heart of the church's witness.

Through fundraising initiatives launched in previous years, the women—resplendent in their distinctive orange attire—transformed generosity into tangible ministry. Their commitment to allocate ten percent of all fundraising proceeds towards mission work has borne significant fruit,

contributing to a fund of approximately R200,000. As a result, mercy exceeded expectations: instead of distributing the ten blankets originally planned, fifteen blankets were delivered to those in need.

Synod also received confirmation that the development project is now officially registered, ensuring that compassion is not only heartfelt but also organised, accountable, and sustainable. Since the devastating fire disasters of April 2023, the project has continued to serve affected communities, bearing witness to what can happen when faith rolls up its sleeves instead of merely folding its hands.

As reports were presented and gratitude expressed, one message emerged clearly: while success is often measured in numbers and statistics, the church continues to measure it in lives touched, hope restored, and acts of mercy carried out in the name of Christ. Through Izenzo Zenceba, the Kumkani Hintsa District Women's Manyano reminds us that the Gospel is not only proclaimed—it is lived.



BOOKS AVAILABLE

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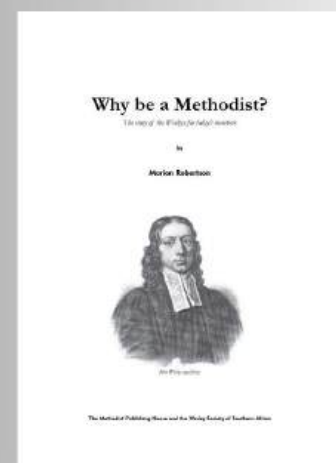
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IMPORTANT DATES IN JUNE

June	01	International Children's Day	
June	02	Connexional Unit Leaders' Meeting	MCO
June	03	Finance Unit Investment and Advisory Meeting	Virtual
June	03-04	Order of Evangelism General Committee Meeting	eMseni
June	04	Connexional Heritage Committee	Virtual
June	06	MCSA Church Funds Investment and Advisory Committee	TBA
June	06	Local Preachers' Department – FCM Oral Examination	All Districts
June	09-10	DEWCOM Meeting	Virtual
June	10	Supernumerary Pension Fund Meeting	MCO
June	11	EMMU – Superintendents' Refresher Course	Virtual
June	11	Lay Staff Pension and Provident Fund Meeting	MCO
June	12-13	Music Association: Music Workshop	Central District
June	12	Boundaries Conversation: Stage ii Formation of New Districts	Aliwal North
June	13-14	Young Men's Guild Connexional Inkayamba/SetsoKotsane Revival	uPhondolwendlovu District
June	16	Youth Day – South Africa	
June	17	Ecumenical Affairs Advisory Board Meeting	MCO
June	17	Stipend Augmentation Meeting	MCO
June	17-18	Local Preachers' Department District Secretaries Consultation	eMseni
June	18	Mission Unit Advisory Board Meeting	MCO
June	18	Medical Aid Committee Meeting	Virtual
June	19	Synergising the Orders Meeting	Virtual
June	19	Boundaries Conversation: Stage ii Formation of New Districts	Mpumalanga
June	22	Marsh Insurance Meeting	Virtual
June	23	Connexional Committee on Chaplaincy Meeting	Virtual
June	24	Church Unity Commission Executive	Virtual
June	25	Finance Unit Executive	MCO
June	28	Local Preachers Sunday	All Districts

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

Ordinary Time	Liturgical Colour: Green
<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	
<i>Proper 6A – 14 June, 2026</i> Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7) OR Exodus 19:2-8a – Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 OR Psalm 100 – Romans 5:1-8 – Matthew 9:35-10:8 (9-23)	
<i>Proper 7A – 21 June, 2026</i> Genesis 21:8-21 OR Jeremiah 20:7-13 – Psalm 86:1-10 OR Psalm 69:7-10, (11-15), 16-18 – Romans 6:1b-11 – Matthew 10:24-39	
<i>Proper 8A – 28 June, 2026</i> Genesis 22:1-14 OR Jeremiah 28:5-9 – Psalm 13 OR Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 – Romans 6:12-23 – Matthew 10:40-42	
<i>Proper 9A – 05 July, 2026</i> Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 OR Zechariah 9:9-12 – Psalm 45:10-17 OR Song of Solomon 2:8-13 OR Psalm 145:8-14 – Romans 7:15-25a – Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30	
<i>Proper 10A – 12 July, 2026</i> Genesis 25:19-34 OR Isaiah 55:10-13 – Psalm 119:105-112 OR Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13 – Romans 8:1-11 – Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23	