

## **MESSAGE TO THE METHODIST PEOPLE FROM CONFERENCE 2014**

Bernard Baruch said "most successful people he has known are the ones who do more listening than talking". This report captures what God has been saying to the conference through His faithful Servants from 17 -21 September 2014.

The 125<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Methodist Church gathered in the beautiful Natal Coastal District under the theme "Together a Transforming Discipleship Movement." We met in the milieu of a heart-troubling wave of social unrest, Lesotho's political tensions, service delivery protests in South Africa and the ongoing Israel-Palestine war.

In a prophetic message in his opening address, the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Ziphozihle Siwa, charged the Methodist people to love mercy, act justly and walk humbly with God. The chief-shepherd of the MCSA, cajoled us to stop the negative self-talk, appreciate ourselves and dance with God for the many good things that are happening around the Connexion. He also reminded us of the brokenness of our society and to walk and weep alongside the marginalised.

The conference was soaked in anointed moments of Praise, Prayer and Worship. In his very challenging and heart inspiring two-part Bible Study, the Rev Luvuyo Sifo reminded us of the importance of 'Togetherness' which taught us that unity does not mean sameness. He also challenged us to use all our five human senses in order to be an effective transforming discipleship movement.

We celebrate the Grace moments of achievements with the General Secretary Rev Vido Nyobole along the way over his 3 terms of office. The 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of the L &D which is now called the Book of Order has been published and will be available from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014. He challenged us to strive towards a discerning process of leadership election. We were blessed to have a person who has shown diligence, commitment and dedication towards the work of God. Furthermore we also celebrated the excellent ministry of the outgoing Lay President Judge Dotwana who in his report made a passionate call for the church to use its Prophetic Voice.

The outgoing Lay General Treasurer Mr Anthony Tibbit steps down after 18 years of faithful service. He expressed concern at the reduction of agency and advised conference on a more profitable and creative use of property resources. He also reported about the smooth relocation of the MCO House to Bruma in Johannesburg. As Mr Tibbit graciously exits the office of treasury the Lord provides us with yet another gift to the church Mrs Thini Ngonyama to continue with the excellent work done by Mr Tibbit.

We acknowledge the sterling work of EMMU and SMMS in the training of our ministers and other orders in the MCSA. God has added and blessed us with 28 ordinands, 2 transfers in, 5 deacons and 1 NINS, who were received into full connexion. Surely this church is not dying!!

The Mission Unit with support from its overseas partners demonstrated great work, Acts of Mercy and Compassion throughout the Connexion. The gruesome story of a girl who was raped twice reminded conference of the enormity of the work of Justice and child care. Conference

encourages all Methodists to support the Thursday in Black campaign, to continue highlighting the scourge of violence against women and children.

The inspiring reports by the different Units and Organisations within the Connexion, bear testimony that we are a church that is alive and in mission. The Ecumenical Affairs Unit has encouraged the Methodist People to continue in Ecumenical engagements. CUC reminded us that God calls the church to unite and do ministry together. The creative use of Technology demonstrated by DEWCOM is empowering and resourceful to the church. This technology gives all Methodists easy access to the information on the MCSA website.

The Communication Unit reminded us that our lives as disciples of Christ, as per the conference theme, are also a major communication tool that should not be taken for granted.

Rev Dr John Borman conducted a spirit filled comforting memorial service in which our beloved brothers and sisters lives were celebrated. He gave us hope and encouragement, reminding us that the suffering of this world cannot be compared to the glory that awaits us.

“He has showed you, o man, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

And to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)