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**MCSA ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS UNIT NEWSLETTER 2021**

**`#ONE**

**JANUARY 2021**

**Greetings<sup>1</sup>**

O King of peace, give us your peace,  
establish for us your peace, and forgive us our sins.  
Bless us all, purify our hearts.  
Heal the sickness, of our souls and our bodies.  
We worship you, O Christ,  
with your good Parent,  
and the Holy Spirit,  
for you have come to save us.  
Have mercy on us.

**WE EXTEND OUR CONDOLENCES TO ALL WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES TO  
COVID 19**

We are all saddened at the loss of a true activist, humanitarian, ecumenist and public theologian who practised what he taught. Passing away on 7 January University of KwaZulu Natal University lecturer, **Dr Clint Le Bruyns**<sup>2</sup> will be deeply missed. Our prayers are with friends and family. His legacy lives on through his students and Kairos Palestine and DR Congo Kairos movement which he helped birth.

MCSA **Bishop Rev Mthobeli Matyumza**<sup>3</sup> passed away late in 2020. You are missed.

There are a growing number of COVID 19 deaths among us. Our condolence and prayers are with you. The second wave has certainly come at us like a tsunami.

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<sup>1</sup> Coptic hymn in the form of prayer from the Coptic Anaphora

<sup>2</sup> a WhatsApp tribute group has been set up to honour Clint .... if you would like to join ...  
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CZFFIRXsw7B8cd2zfj4oO>

<sup>3</sup> [Bishop Mthobeli Matyumza, Queenstown... - The Methodist ...](https://www.facebook.com/MethChurch/photos/bishop...) 

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## ECOLOGICAL LESSONS FROM COVID 19

The MCSA and many other church formations, notably the Green Anglicans, have for a long time been preaching and resolving to make normative again the interconnectedness between God; Self; Neighbour and Nature to pervade all that we theologise and do in our praxis. (Romans 8)

If nature is sick humanity is sick. If nature is healthy humanity is healthy.

Let us be mindful that the current pandemic is linked to everything environmental.

*“The coronavirus crisis will not be the last pandemic, and attempts to improve human health are “doomed” without tackling climate change and animal welfare, the World Health Organization's chief said.”<sup>4</sup>*

If anything, the COVID 19 has taught what the ancients have always known and modernity and more so post modernity individualism has worked against; is that, central to being and growing as humanity, is to be in healthy relationship. When these relationships are broken between humans and nature, we see how humanity self-destructs over and over.

## 2021 YEAR OF METAMORPHOSIS

It is the time of year where we wish each other a Happy New Year. One of the New Year well wishes that came my way from Pastor Serge Lau, and expressed, I think what we are really longing for, in which it was declared: **2021 YEAR OF METAMORPHOSIS** (Transformation) (01/01/2021)

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The **Presiding Bishop of the MCSA** has reiterated that we need to perpetually **re-imagine healing and transformation**. After the re-imagining the trajectory moves into signs of authentic metamorphous which comes into full realisation (Incarnational). The old has gone the new has come

Transformation (metamorphous) is not repentance (metanoia). Repentance is needed ‘to turn around’ toward reimagining and realising **metamorphotic** c transformation.

Where is repentance needed? Well, you can answer this in your personal life, however we need also to do collective repentance in our collective public spaces. Where there are broken relationships repentance, healing and metamorphous is needed.

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<sup>4</sup> [Covid-19 pandemic will not be the last: WHO chief \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com)

### Once we decide by choice to turn around then the process of metamorphous begins

**Romans 12** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.<sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed (metamorphous)** by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*but be **transformed (metamorphous; μεταμορφωθεί)** by the renewing of your mind*

*What is **metamorphous**? It is a process of becoming something better.*

*In zoology it is a definite visible process:*

1. (in an insect or amphibian) the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form in two or more distinct stages.  
"the persistence of the larval tail during metamorphosis" .

It is "a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one."

Another image of metamorphism is given by Frantz Kafka in his book *Metamorphous*. Here the human Gregor is transformed into an insect. His family react differently. This motif has inspired many horror genre movies. You may have heard movie critics speak of a film that is Kafkaesque.

However, Kafka's idea of metamorphous in my opinion also raises the question whether metamorphous means only transformation into something better or could it sometimes transform from bad to worse?

Further still, could metamorphous be so dramatic that the transformation becomes something beyond our imagination? Its appearance is so grotesque and unexpected that we fear that which it has become -even though it is just different and not harmful. This for me is, reminiscent of Peter's vision of eating what many would call ludicrous food. *-He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners.<sup>12</sup> In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air.<sup>13</sup> Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."<sup>14</sup> But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean."<sup>15</sup> The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." A dramatic transformational moment for Peter!!*

Using the zoological analogy let us allow our imaginations to be ignited as we think of us going through the stages of repentance and transformation to reach full maturity or becoming a totally different humanity. (2 Corinthians 5:17) (Revelation 7 and 21)

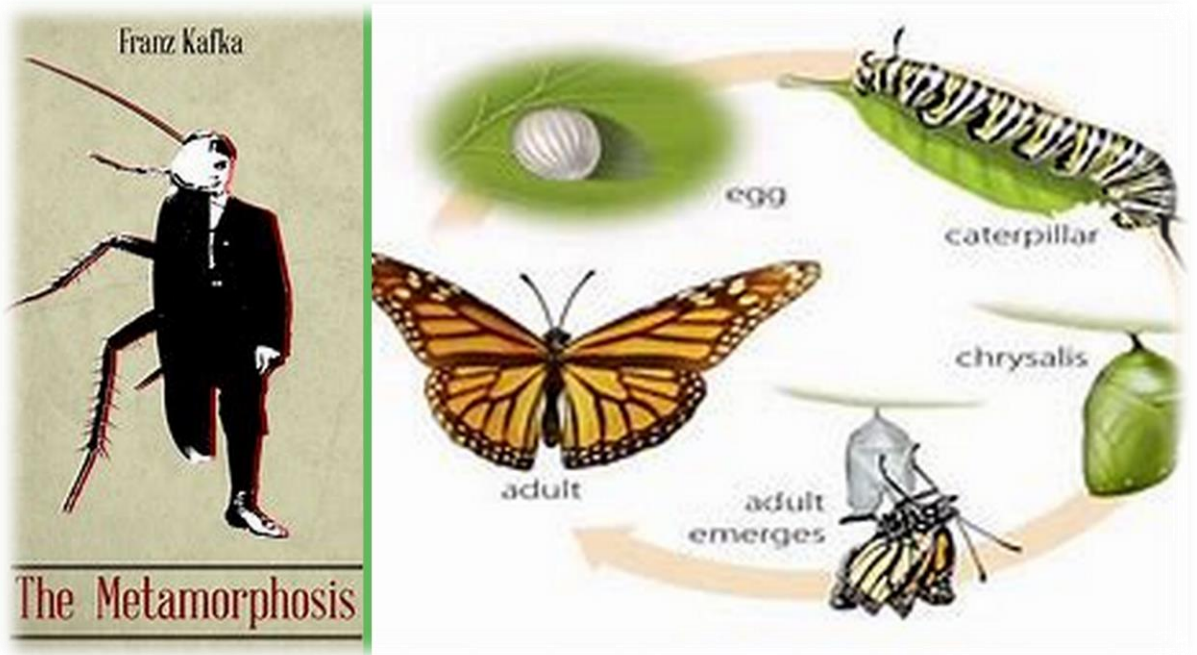
### What will the following isms look like in a newly metamorphic transformed just world?

Racism: Sexism: Ageism: Tribalism: Classism: Environmentalism: Denominationalism.

<b>A REFLECTION MOMENT:</b>
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- Look at these photos?
- What do they speak to us about?

- Is it probable that those within these two groups on two different continents, claimed to be; born again<sup>5</sup> have metamorphosed into unjust; racist; sexist, exclusivist, bigoted ‘insect forms’ of pseudo- Christianity? Likened to what ISIS is to Islam?
- Who needs to repent?
- Could a new just and equitable metamorphic transformed beautiful world emerge from these situations? What needs to change?



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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 7:

<sup>6</sup> All images come from the public website pages.



Washington  
USA  
2021



Senekal  
RSA  
2020



Senekal  
RSA  
2020



Washington  
USA  
2021



**Senekal  
RSA  
2020**

**Let our slogan and mantra for this year be with Pastor Serge Lau:**

**2021 YEAR OF METAMORPHOSIS**

**How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!**

<sup>2</sup> It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron's beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.

<sup>3</sup> It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.  
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,  
even life for evermore.

Psalm 133

*May you and yours have a blessed, safe and peace-filled New Year*

**Rev Mike Vorster  
Director of Ecumenical Affairs Unit  
Methodist Church of Southern Africa**