



The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

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To: All Ministers and Methodist People

Reimagining Healing and Transformation

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) notes with deep sadness and concern the video recorded and released by Mr Rowan Rennie, a former Minister of the MCSA which has gone viral. This video clip allegedly seeks to explain the purported reasons why Mr Rennie and a group of followers have left the MCSA. He gives a number of theological and biblical reasons for their decision, as well as a claim that through the release thereof, to the general public, they sought to challenge the MCSA to return to what they claim to be the 'original' theological and biblical tenets and beliefs.

It is important to note that it is not the MCSA's practice to publicly comment on the resignations of Ministers. However, having received and accepted the resignation of Mr Rennie, we note with deep disappointment the aspersive encouragement and invitation to other Methodists to join him. This is a wilful breaking of a covenant he had made both at acceptance as a Candidate for the Ministry, his subsequent Ordination Vows and annual undertakings made over his two-decade long ministry in the MCSA. The breaking of these solemn and sacred vows is not viewed lightly.

The MCSA as part of the global Wesleyan family holds firmly to the belief, as taught by John Wesley our founding father, that there is no Holiness but Social Holiness and that "*Methodism was raised up to spread Scriptural Holiness throughout the land by the proclamation of the Evangelical Faith*".

This theological truth undergirds all of our beliefs in God, Salvation, our humanity and our relationship with all of creation. This notwithstanding, it is Wesleyan ethos to hold in tension divergent views within the Wesleyan Movement and this includes issues of doctrine, theological views, social and political views even biblical interpretation and practice.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism said it best when speaking to those who opposed him:

"Give me your hand. I do not mean, 'Be of my opinion.' You need not: I do not expect it or desire it. Neither do I mean I will be of your opinion. I cannot. Keep your opinion; I mine; and that as steadily as ever. You need not endeavour to come over to me or bring me to you. Only give me your hand. We must act as each is fully persuaded in their own mind. Hold fast that which you believe is most

A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations

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acceptable to God, and I will do the same. Let all these smaller points stand aside. If your heart is as my heart, if you love God and all humankind, I ask no more. Simply, give me your hand. "

It is this, one of Methodism's fundamental values, which we have held true through the ages on the many differences of opinion, decision-making and policy changes. Most recently the MCSA has been invited through the Presiding Bishop's address; to continue to reimagine and re-envision how to be part of Africa and her communities' transformation and healing.

"To re-imagine healing and transformation therefore calls upon us to look again at what it means for us to proclaim the Gospel for healing and transformation; it means we join the re-imagining tradition of the prophets and become an active part of God's grace in the world." PB Address 2020

Methodists were further called to join the movement of God's long arc of justice; not the God of personal piety- divorced from the pain of the world, but instead the God who listens to the cries of the oppressed and acts to release them.

While it is true that the MCSA, like other denominations, has seen divergent views lead to breakaways and the formation of new churches, this no doubt brings pain to many hearts and indeed to God's heart, as it opposes the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to heal and transform. We therefore grieve this split as a Methodist family, but commit to walk alongside the St Luke-Welkom Methodists as they journey towards healing.

We hereby urge and call upon all Ministers, Synods, Circuits, Societies and Mission Groups to:

- Engage in open conversations to raise the theological issues we are not clear about or uncomfortable with, in ways that will lead to a deeper understanding of the Methodist way of life and ethos. Maligning and breaking away from the church will not create reformation, transformation or bring healing to us, our nations, our continent or the world.
- Furthermore, an urgent call is made to all Ministers to assist our membership to understand our ethos, theology, practices as well as the processes of discernment and decision making within the MCSA to ensure that all Methodists understand how each one is able, under God's guidance, to contribute in shaping and transforming the church.

Our Vision remains that of a Christ Healed Africa for the Healing of Nations. Spreading Scriptural Holiness throughout the land remains relevant and fundamental today as always and we as Methodists are invited afresh, guided by God's Mission, to re-imagine healing and transformation within the church and in God's World.

Kind regards,



Rev Purity Malinga
Presiding Bishop