

## What is a Congress!

A **congress** is a formal meeting or assembly of representatives, delegates, or members of a particular group or organization. The purpose of a congress varies depending on its context but generally includes discussing, deliberating, and deciding on important matters, policies, or issues.

### Types of Congresses

1. **Political Congress:** In many countries, such as the United States, a congress is a legislative body responsible for creating laws and governing.
2. **Professional Congress:** Organizations, professions, or industries often hold congresses to discuss developments, share knowledge, and network.
3. **Religious or Community Congress:** Groups within a religious or community setting may hold congresses to address spiritual, social, or organizational matters.
4. **Academic Congress:** Scholars and researchers gather at academic congresses to present findings, discuss theories, and collaborate on studies.

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### Importance of a Congress

1. **Decision-Making:**
  - Provides a platform for representatives to debate and decide on significant issues or policies affecting the group, organization, or society.
2. **Knowledge Sharing:**
  - Facilitates the exchange of ideas, innovations, and expertise among participants, especially in academic and professional congresses.
3. **Networking:**
  - Offers an opportunity to establish relationships, partnerships, or collaborations among individuals with shared interests or goals.
4. **Strategic Planning:**
  - Enables organizations to set goals, review achievements, and plan for the future collectively.
5. **Representation:**
  - Ensures that diverse voices and perspectives within the group or organization are heard and considered.
6. **Advocacy:**
  - Creates a unified platform to promote specific causes, policies, or objectives to a broader audience or governing body.
7. **Community Building:**



- Strengthens the sense of belonging and unity within a group, fostering collaboration and mutual support.

#### 8. **Accountability:**

- Provides a space for reviewing and reporting progress, ensuring transparency and accountability in leadership or operations.

By bringing together individuals or representatives, congresses play a vital role in fostering dialogue, making collective decisions, and advancing shared objectives.



## Section A: Organizing the Mission Congress Workshop

### Planning the Workshop

#### 1. Invitation Letters

- Draft formal letters inviting participants from all demographics (youth, adults, mission groups, church leaders, etc.). Mention the importance of the workshop in shaping the future of the MCSA's mission and its relevance for the Mission Congress 2025.

#### 2. Advertising Methods

- Utilize church bulletins, WhatsApp groups, posters in community spaces, announcements during services, and social media platforms.
- Gather evidence such as screenshots, physical posters, and announcements.

#### 3. Gatekeepers' Consent

- Obtain formal consent from the Circuit Superintendent, Society Stewards, and other relevant leaders.

#### 4. Participant Demographics

- Prepare an attendance register capturing age, gender, and church roles. Ensure data is signed off by the Circuit Superintendent.

#### 5. Workshop Programme

- **Opening Devotion and Introduction**
- **Review of Previous Mission Congress Resolutions**
- **Group Discussions on Key Themes**
- **Theologies Emerging Today**
- **Recommendations for Mission Congress 2025**
- **Feedback and Closing Session**

#### 6. Evaluation Report

- Document the facilitator's feedback on participation, insights, and the success of the workshop.

### Section B: Workshop Outcomes Report

#### 1. Evaluation of the 2004 and 2016 Mission Congresses

The 2004 Mission Congress introduced the **Mission Charter**, focusing on the four imperatives: spirituality, justice, evangelism, and empowerment. It birthed resolutions addressing holistic mission practices, such as:

- **Healing Ministries:** Promoting spiritual and physical well-being.



- **Empowerment:** Training in evangelism and combating socio-economic disparities.
- **Inclusivity:** Encouraging diversity across race, gender, and age.

The 2016 Congress emphasized listening and inclusivity, fostering dialogue across Methodism's diverse communities. Challenges remain in implementation:

- **Successes:** Introduction of HIV/AIDS initiatives and deeper ecumenical cooperation.
- **Challenges:** Resistance to change in some Circuits and lack of resources for broader mission work.

## 2. Theologies Emerging in Today's Context (examples only, please create theologies based on your feedback)

The Church continues to engage with pressing socio-political and spiritual issues:

- **Liberation Theology:** Addressing systemic inequality and poverty.
- **Eco-Theology:** Recognizing the environmental crisis as a spiritual issue.
- **Contextual Theology:** Embracing African spiritual traditions within the Christian framework.
- **Mental Health Ministry:** Responding to the rise in psychological distress, promoting care within communities.

These theologies reflect the MCSA's ongoing commitment to transformation as articulated in **Obedience '81**.

## 3. Implementation for 2025 Mission Congress

To ensure the 2025 Congress achieves tangible impact:

- **Thematic Resolutions:**
  - Empower Circuits to address mental health, youth unemployment, and ecological challenges.
- **Practical Steps:**
  - Develop resource-sharing platforms for Circuits.
  - Train facilitators in contextual theology and mission imperatives.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
  - Establish quarterly check-ins for resolution implementation.

The focus should be on aligning efforts with the Church's vision of "A Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations".

## Conclusion



The Methodist Church of Southern Africa has a rich legacy of mission, reflected in Obedience '81, the Journey to the New Land, and the Mission Charter. By learning from past Congresses and embracing contemporary challenges, the Church can reaffirm its commitment to transformation and healing in Southern Africa.



## Section A: Organizing the Mission Congress Workshop

### Steps to Prepare:

#### 1. Invitation Letters:

- Draft formal letters inviting participants, highlighting the purpose of the workshop and its importance for the upcoming Mission Congress 2025. Ensure the invitations are inclusive of all demographics, including youth, women, and men, as well as all mission groups.

#### 2. Advertising Methods:

- Use diverse methods to promote the workshop:
  - **Digital Platforms:** Social media posts, church WhatsApp groups, and email announcements.
  - **Print Media:** Posters and flyers in church and community centers.
  - **Verbal Announcements:** During church services and gatherings.
- Collect evidence such as screenshots, posters, and recordings of announcements.

#### 3. Letters of Consent from Gatekeepers:

- Draft and obtain formal permissions from key leaders (Circuit Superintendent, Society Stewards, and other relevant stakeholders).

#### 4. Demographic Statistics:

- Design an attendance register to capture participant data (age, gender, role in the church, etc.).
- Ensure these are countersigned by the Circuit Superintendent after the workshop.

#### 5. Programme for the Workshop:

- Create a detailed programme, including:
  - Opening devotion and welcome.
  - Overview of the previous Mission Congresses.
  - Group discussions and plenary sessions.
  - Keynote addresses or presentations by mission facilitators.
  - Summary and feedback session.

#### 6. Evaluation Report:

- After the workshop, request the Circuit Mission Congress Facilitator to compile a report evaluating:
  - Participation levels.



- Insights and feedback shared during discussions.
- Overall success and areas for improvement.

## Section B: Report on Workshop Outcomes

### 1. Critical Evaluation of the 2004 and 2016 Mission Congresses (1000 words)

- **2004 Mission Congress:**
  - Review the resolutions and the birth of the Mission Charter and Mission Pillars.
  - Evaluate how these resolutions were implemented in your Circuit:
    - Were specific pillars prioritized (e.g., evangelism, social justice)?
    - Identify successes and challenges in implementation.
- **2016 Mission Congress:**
  - Assess the inclusivity and diversity of voices during the 2016 Congress.
  - Examine how its themes were localized within your Circuit.
  - Reflect on whether its outcomes influenced practical changes.
- Use church records, reports, and interviews to substantiate your evaluation.

### 2. Theologies Emerging from Today's Context

- Discuss contextual theologies shaped by:
  - **Current Challenges:**
    - Socioeconomic inequality, mental health crises, political instability, and ecological concerns.
  - **Local Responses:**
    - Liberation theology, feminist theology, ecological theology, or African spirituality within the church context.
  - Highlight specific examples where the church has innovatively responded to these challenges (e.g., community outreach programs or social justice initiatives).

### 3. Recommendations for the 2025 Mission Congress

- Based on the workshop discussions and identified theologies:
  - **Proposed Resolutions:**
    - Recommend actionable resolutions for the Congress that address societal issues.



- **Implementation Strategies:**
    - Suggest how these resolutions can be translated into concrete actions.
    - Propose timelines, resource allocations, and responsible teams.
  - **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
    - Recommend systems for tracking progress and ensuring accountability.
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### Required Reading Materials

- Engage deeply with the provided readings:
    - Understand the historical milestones and theological frameworks of the MCSA.
    - Incorporate insights from **Obedience '81, Journey to the New Land**, and other foundational documents into your evaluation and recommendations.
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### Submission Checklist

- Section A: Invitation letters, advertising evidence, gatekeeper consents, demographic statistics, workshop programme, evaluation report.
- Section B: essays addressing the specified topics.

