

# Programme

## KAIROS TODAY: REFLECTIONS ON FAITH, JUSTICE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Wednesday, 09 April 2025 | 09:00 AM – 16:45 PM  
Senate Hall, WMM Building, UNISA

Commemorating 40 years of South African Kairos Document of 1985, a landmark in the fight for justice.

- 08:00 – 09:00**      **Arrival & Registration**
- 09:00 – 09:30**      **Opening & Welcoming:**
- *Program Director:* Dr Siphso Mahlangu
  - **Welcoming:** Prof Puleng LenkaBula, UNISA Principal & Vice Chancellor
  - *Outline the Purpose of the Event:* Prof Mokhele Madise, Director: School of Humanities
- 09:30 – 10:00**      *Introduction of Keynote Speaker:* Prof Zethu Nkosi, Executive Dean: College of Human Sciences  
**Keynote Speaker:** Rev Dr Frank Chikane  
*Topic: The Kairos Legacy: Faith-Based Movements and the Struggle for Justice Today*
- 10:00 – 10:30**      **Facilitator of Q&A:** Dr Lerato Kobe
- 10:30 – 11:00**      **Tea/Coffee Break**
- 11:00 – 12:30**      **Session 1: Panel Discussion**
- *Session Chair:* Prof Tshepo Lephakga
  - *Topic: Kairos at 40: Reflections from Its Architects and Advocates*
  - **Panelists:** Rev Moss Ntlha, Rev Dr Wesley Mabuza, Bishop Dr Purity Malinga, Rev Mzwandile Molo
- 12:30 – 13:30**      **Lunch**
- 13:30 – 14:30**      **Session 2: Panel Discussion**
- *Session Chair:* Dr Sipokazi Madida
  - *Topic: Kairos Revisited: Lessons from History and Theology*
  - **Panelists:** Prof Luvuyo Dondolo; Prof Dirk Kotze, Prof Fundiswa Kobo, Prof Sepetla Molapo
- 15:00 – 15:30**      **Tea/Coffee Break**
- 15:30 – 16:30**      **Session 3: Panel Discussion**
- *Session Chair:* Ms Lethuxolo Nkosi
  - *Topic: Reimagining Kairos: The Prophetic Voice for Today and Beyond*
  - **Panelists:** Ms Siphoesihle Gumede, Mr Fabian Oliver, Dr Thembelani Jentile, Rev Thandanani Savhasa.
- 16:30 – 16:45**      **Closing Remarks:** Prof Hulisani Ramantswana

09 April 2025

## **Commemorating 40 Years of Prophetic Witness: Reflecting on the Legacy and Relevance of the South African Kairos Document (1985–2025)**

The University of South Africa (UNISA) is honoured to host the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the South African *Kairos Document* (1985–2025)—a prophetic voice that challenged both church and society during the height of apartheid. More than a historical moment, this commemorative event is a theological gathering of faith leaders, theologians, activists, and scholars who continue to be shaped by the *Kairos Document's* enduring vision. The programme includes keynote address, panel discussions, and a call to action for the church to once again become the moral compass of our time. Esteemed voices such as Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane, Rev. Moss Nthla, Rev. Dr. Wesley Mabuza, Bishop Dr. Purity Malinga, Rev. Mzwandile Molo, and others will grace the occasion alongside UNISA leadership and critical theological thinkers.

This is not only a celebration of history—it is a call to renew the church's prophetic role in shaping a just and faithful future. As Tinyiko Maluleke (2008) asserts, the *Kairos Document* “pushed the boundaries of what the church was willing to say publicly,” challenging both religious complicity and political injustice with bold theological critique.

### **The Relevance of the Kairos Document and Today's Kairos Moment**

The *Kairos Document* of 1985 was more than a critique of apartheid—it was a courageous theological response to systemic evil that called out the silence and moral ambivalence of much of the South African church. It denounced both “State Theology” and the cautious “Church Theology,” and offered instead a prophetic theology rooted in justice and solidarity with the oppressed (Maluleke, 2008; De Gruchy, 2006).

As Gerrie Lubbe (2003) notes, the document was born at a time when South Africa stood at a moral crossroads—a *kairos* moment—defined as a time of crisis and opportunity when moral clarity becomes imperative. The authors declared unequivocally that neutrality in such times is a sin, and that faith must lead to action. That call echoes powerfully today. We are again living through a *kairos* moment—marked by rising inequality, gender-based violence, xenophobia, corruption, ecological destruction, and the betrayal of democratic promises. Sarojini Nadar (2014) argues that our time demands “a new *kairos* theology that speaks to intersectional oppression—gender, race, class, and ecology.” The prophetic church must therefore be intersectional, disruptive, and justice-oriented.

James Cochrane (1999) reminds us that prophetic witness involves resisting “respectable religion” that cushions power. Rather, the church must stand with “the crucified peoples of history,” rejecting accommodation to injustice. Similarly, Musa Dube (2012) insists that theology today must be activist and transformative—calling not only for speech but also for performative justice.

The *Kairos Document* also left a deep imprint on biblical and theological scholarship. Gerald West (2010) notes that it fostered a contextual hermeneutic that reads the Bible in solidarity with the poor. This approach continues to inspire liberationist theology across the Global South. To remember the *Kairos Document*, then, is to resist the erasure of liberative memory. As Denise Ackermann (2001) has said, “To remember is to resist forgetting. To remember is to insist on justice.” Thus, the 40th anniversary is not simply a historical reflection—it is a prophetic invocation.

In the words of the document itself: “*The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived.*” This celebration calls us again to choose truth over fear, justice over neutrality, and prophetic action over silence.

**Dr Sipho Mahlangu**

College of Human Sciences | School of Humanities  
Department of Philosophy, Practical & Systematic Theology

***Keynote Speaker: The Kairos Legacy: Faith-Based Movements and the Struggle for Justice Today***

**Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane**

Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane is currently an emeritus pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM); a Visiting Adjunct Professor of the Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand; Chair of the South African (SA) Chapter of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) against Israel's settler-colonial apartheid regime from the river Jordan to the Mediterranean sea; Chair of the Integrity Commission of the African National Congress (ANC); a member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Veterans League of the ANC; and a Co-Convener of the Africa and African Diaspora (AAD) responsible for the 2021 AAD Conference which brought people of African Descent globally and Africans on the continent. It is now heading for the 2026 Conference.

Rev. Chikane was a Moderator of the Churches Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) from 2016 to 2022, which deals with conflict situations in the world, and support initiatives for peacekeeping, justice and overcoming poverty globally.

He is a former Director of the Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT) which was responsible for the Kairos Document of 1985; General Secretary and former Deputy President of the South African Council of Churches (SACC); former National (SA) and International President of the AFM; former member of the Advisory Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC); former Deputy President of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Soweto Civic Association (SCA); former member of the NEC of the ANC.

He served as a member of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) for the first democratic elections in South Africa of 1994 which delivered the first democratic government. He is a former Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet (during President Nelson Mandela presidency) and former Director General and Secretary of Cabinet (during President Thabo Mbeki's and President Kgalema Motlanthe's presidencies. He was involved in the development and promotion of the African Renaissance vision which gave birth to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) under the leadership of President Mbeki.

Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane holds two degrees: Master of Arts in Religious Studies (Natal University, now KZN University) and Master of Arts in Public Administration (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University); and honorary doctorates/degrees from the Groningen University (Netherlands), Oberlin College (USA), and Nelson Mandela University (SA) He has published and edited a number of books, papers and articles. Among these are *No Life of My Own*, *Eight Days in September*, and *The Things that Could Not Be Said*.

***Panel 1: Kairos at 40 – Reflections from Its Architects and Advocates***

**Rev. Moss Ntlha**

Rev. Moss Ntlha is the General Secretary of The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa and a prominent church leader known for his contributions to public theology, reconciliation, social justice, and transformation in South Africa. He is involved in initiatives to that end both in the Church and in Civil Society. Rev. Ntlha has engaged in public policy advocacy both in South Africa and internationally, dealing with matters of faith and socio-political justice. His passion is to see the gospel impact lives at a personal and public policy levels. He is a church planter, disciple maker and activist for justice. A keen student of the evangelical movement and holds degrees in theology (Mth) and natural Science (BSC). He also chairs the Defend Our Democracy movement, which is a coalition of Civil Society organisations committed to Constitutional Democracy and social justice. He is married to Khumo and they are blessed with two children.

### **Rev. Dr. Wesley Mabuza**

Rev. Dr. Wesley Mabuza is a distinguished South African theologian, ecumenical leader, and social justice advocate with decades of pastoral, academic, and civic engagement experience. He holds a PhD in Science of Religion and Missiology from the University of Pretoria, with his doctoral thesis titled *“Kairos Revisited: Investigating the Relevance of the Kairos Document for Church-State Relations within a Democratic South Africa.”* His academic journey also includes a master’s degree in religious studies from Wits University, and earlier theological and humanities qualifications from UCT, UNISA, and Methodist Church formation institutions. His intellectual pursuits have always been intricately tied to issues of democracy, social transformation, and contextual theology. Rev. Dr. Mabuza’s career spans national and international leadership roles. He served as General Secretary of the Institute for Contextual Theology during the critical transition to South Africa’s democracy and was also Director of Faith and Mission at the South African Council of Churches. Internationally, he has represented the South African church and civil society in forums from Cyprus to Canada, Sri Lanka to San Francisco, addressing topics ranging from the death penalty and interfaith cooperation to peace-building and economic justice. A former Chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Rights, Dr. Mabuza remains deeply involved in both church and civil society initiatives that continue to shape the public theology landscape in South Africa. He is currently the Chairperson of Siyavuma Foundation and a board member of the Gauteng Council of Churches.

### **Bishop Dr. Purity Malinga**

Bishop Dr. Purity Malinga is a trailblazing theologian, church leader, and educator who has dedicated her life to ministry, theological education, and the empowerment of women in both church and society. Born and raised in Ixopo, KwaZulu-Natal, she began her professional journey as a teacher, serving in the classroom for five years before responding to the call to ordained ministry in 1981 under the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA). She pursued her theological education at the Federal Theological Seminary in Imbali, earning a Diploma in Theology with Distinction. Ordained in 1988, she went on to complete a Master of Divinity degree at Harvard University in the United States (1989–1992), where she focused on New Testament Hermeneutics. Over the years, Bishop Malinga has contributed to theological scholarship and ministerial formation through teaching and leadership at several institutions, including the Federal Theological Seminary, TEEC, John Wesley College, and the University of Pretoria. Bishop Malinga has served the Methodist Church with distinction, breaking barriers and setting new paths. She became the first woman to be elected as Bishop of the Natal Coastal District (2000–2008), and in 2019, she made history again as the first woman to be elected Presiding Bishop of the MCSA—a position she held with vision and integrity until her retirement at the end of 2023. In recognition of her lifelong commitment to justice, gender inclusion, and theological leadership, the University of South Africa conferred upon her an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Theology in 2024.

### **Rev. Mzwandile Molo**

Rev. Mzwandile Molo is a seasoned Methodist minister and visionary leader with over 30 years of service in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. Ordained in 1997 after earning a BTh (Hons) from Rhodes University, his ministry began in the early 1990s in Mabopane during South Africa’s democratic transition. These formative years deepened his passion for reconciliation, cultural diversity, and community building. Rev. Molo served in Soshanguve and later at Bethesda Methodist Mission in Johannesburg, where he championed initiatives around HIV/AIDS, poverty alleviation, education, and social justice. In 2014, he joined the South African Council of Churches (SACC), serving in various leadership roles including Acting General Secretary (2022) and officially appointed General Secretary in 2024. Throughout his ministry, Rev. Molo has consistently advanced the church’s prophetic voice in national healing, justice, and inclusive transformation.

## ***Panel 2: Kairos Revisited – Lessons from History and Theology***

### **Prof. Luvuyo Dondolo**

Prof. Luvuyo Mthimkhulu Dondolo is an Associate Professor in the Department of History, at UNISA. He holds a Doctoral Degree in Philosophy in History from UFH. He is the Visiting Scholar at the Centre for African Studies, at Kent State University, in the United States of America. In 2022, he was the Ubuntu Dialogues Seminar Fellow housed by Michigan State University and the University of Stellenbosch. He was the Fulbright Scholar in Residency based at Cheyney University in Pennsylvania, USA, for 2016/17. Professor Dondolo is a former Rockefeller Scholarship holder and, as such, studied at Emory University (US), to further his understanding of public history and heritage studies. He specialises in public history with a specific focus on heritage studies, museology, and Pan-African scholarship. Professor Dondolo has published multiple books – including his latest *One Race: The Legacy of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe*-, and book and journal chapters. He has co-authored several books on heritage and public history. His forthcoming edited volume – *African Intellectual Tradition: Towards New Histories* -, and the co-edited - *Spatial Plan Justice in South Africa: (Re)Africanisation of Spatiality*, are in press. Currently, he is writing Rev. Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba's biography.

### **Prof. Dirk Kotzé**

Prof. Dirk Kotzé is lecturing at Unisa since the beginning of 1988 in the Department of Political Sciences. He is a Council member of the South African Association of Political Studies and was also an Executive Committee member and one of the Vice-Presidents of the International Political Science Association. He studied at the Universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria and Wits in Political Science. His most important areas of specialization are South African politics and political conflict resolution. It includes focus areas such as negotiations, transitions and democratization processes, elections, the quality of democracy, political cartoons, international relations, land reform and political parties. In addition to lecturing at Unisa, he also lectured Politics part-time for about 12 years at TUT for the Journalism students, at DIRCO's Foreign Service Institute and the SA Defence College. On the international level, he lectured and studied at Northwestern University in Chicago, at Uppsala University in Sweden and at the Middle Eastern Technical University in Ankara, Türkiye.

### **Prof. Fundiswa Kobo**

Prof Fundiswa Kobo is currently the Chair of the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology at the University of South Africa. She is an NRF rated Associate Professor and the recipient of the Unisa: Women in Research Emerging Research Award for Excellence in Research. Her research looks at Black & Womanist Theologies and argues that patriarchal violence, like race and class is equally a fragmenting evil for liberation of black humanity. She is an ordained minister in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa where she is currently serving as the Clerk of Tshwane Presbytery and a part time minister in Mamelodi East church. She is an ecumenist and has served as an intern in the Theology Desk of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in Hannover, Germany and as an academic Facilitator of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute in Germany. She is also a resource person for Council for World Mission, the World Council of Churches and the South African Council of Churches.

### **Prof. Sepetla Molapo**

Prof. Sepetla Molapo is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of South Africa. He has an eclectic academic background comprising diploma in theology, postgraduate studies in religious studies and development studies. He holds a doctoral degree in sociology and has taught sociology for about 12 years. Prof. Molapo has recently published an edited book volume – *'Collective action in postcolonial societies: beyond the binary of sovereignty and solidarity'*.



### ***Panel 3: Reimagining Kairos – The Prophetic Voice for Today and Beyond***

#### **Ms. Siphoesihle Gumede**

Ms. Siphoesihle Gumede is an emerging scholar and distinguished lecturer at the University of South Africa. An award-winning academic, Gumede was honoured with the prestigious CHS Excellence Award for Transformation in Teaching and Learning at the 2024 Teaching and Learning Festival. As a developing scholar, Gumede's research interests encompass the history of resistance, social movements, and women's history. She is pursuing her PhD in History on a Political Biography of Solomon Mahlangu, a research that aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Mahlangu's contributions to the struggle for freedom and justice, as well as the broader implications of his life and death for the anti-apartheid movement and South African history.

#### **Mr. Fabian Oliver**

Mr. Fabian Ashwin Oliver is an aspiring theologian and part-time lecturer of theology at St. Augustine College in Johannesburg. He is currently pursuing a master's degree at the University of South Africa, focusing on Black Theology of Liberation and Coloured identity in post-1994 South Africa. Fabian has published an article on this topic. Beyond his academic pursuits, Fabian is dedicated to pastoral ministry as a youth pastor and social outreach minister, where he actively engages with individuals who are homeless and living in the brutality of extreme poverty. He is committed to supporting marginalized communities and working towards social justice. In addition to his ministry and academic work, Fabian is a regular writer for *Comboni Worldwide Magazine* and *Nigrizia*. He is passionate about Black Studies, gender and sexuality dialogues, activism, decoloniality, and spirituality. Fabian resides in Johannesburg South with his wife and their two children.

#### **Dr. Thembelani Jentile**

Dr. Thembelani Jentile is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History, and Missiology at the University of South Africa. He is a minister in the Baptist Convention of South Africa and serves on the National Executive Committee of the South African Council of Churches. He has served as the pastoral leader of Mamelodi Baptist Church since 2003. Church History, the Ecumenical Movement, moral formation and social justice, the relationship between Church and government, faith and politics, and African Christian leadership are among his academic and ecclesial interests.

#### **Rev. Thandanani Savhasa**

Rev. Thandanani Savhasa is an ordained pastor in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of South Africa and currently serves as Senior Pastor of the Naledi Assembly in Soweto. She holds prominent leadership roles including AFM National Youth Director, AFM International Youth President, and coordinator of the Faith Girls Ministry (FGM), which focuses on empowering girls and women in their faith journey and dignity. With a Bachelor of Theology from North West University and a Bachelor of Architectural Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand, Rev. Savhasa brings both academic excellence and pastoral experience to her ministry. She has served in youth development through organizations like Columba Leadership and continues to engage in ecumenical work as an Executive Member of the Gauteng Council of Churches. Passionate about creating Christ-centered communities, her ministry vision is rooted in Matthew 25:35–40 and James 2:15–17. She is married to Percy Savhasa and is a devoted mother to their two sons, Thendo and Renda.