



## **The Black Methodist Consultation**

### **Chairman's Address 2019**

#### **Port Edward Natal West District**

***Theme: Burning to Light up for God's Justice***

### **1. Preamble**

The Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Rev, Ziphozihle Siwa; the Bishop of the Natal West Synod Rev T Dlamini; the Rev. Purity Malinga, the incoming Presiding Bishop of our beloved MCSA; all the Bishops and the Bishop elects throughout the connection present here today, the leadership of the Black Methodist Consultation under the stewardship of our General Secretary Mr. Xhanti Mhlubulwana, District Chairpersons of the BMC and your executives, the ministers present here today, members of our movement, guests and visitors I greet you all in the wonderful name of our Lord and Liberator Jesus Christ.

I always consider it a great privilege for me to stand in front of you under the sacred trust you gave to me and those you have chosen as your leadership for the past five years. Your belief in us has only served to humble us as you confirmed our calling from God and allowed us to exercise that very calling in serving you beloved of Christ.

The last five years has given us so much together as we sought to be faithful to the dream of those who gave birth to this movement. The God who calls has been faithful though we might have wavered on the journey. It is in moments of our doubt that we had to hear umfo kaGaba proclaim

***ULoThixo omkhulu, NgoseZulwini***

***Unguwena, Wena, Khakha lenyaniso***

***Unguwena, wena, Nqaba yenyano***

***Unguwena, Wena, Hlathi leNyaniso***

It is in this God when our faith is weak, and the mountain seems insurmountable, with our weary souls and tired minds, we hear our mothers' voices of faith cry out:

***Ha ke Hlaheloa ke lillo.***

***U ntekola ka mosa,***

***U ntlela ka lipoleleo,***

***Tse pakisang ho nthusa;***

***Ha ke re ke mofatsana,***

***U re; che, u na le na!***

***Ha ke re; khoro ea hana,***

***U re che U tla kena.***

It is this God who refused to allow our tiredness to stop us from going on. It is this God who refused out faithlessness to degenerate into cynicism and our mental fatigue to stop us from imagining. We are all children of this amazing God.

## **2. Introduction**

We meet again on the 44<sup>th</sup> year of our great and glorious movement. God's divine providence has brought us this beautiful part of our connexion. Our search for God can be answered by our eyes, seeing the magnificence of God's creation that can only be matched by the courage and generosity of our people. Mike Ngxokolo might have had this beauty in his imagination when he declared:

***Ingumangaliso Imisebenzi ka Thixo***

***Maka bongwe ngelizwi elivakalayo***

***Zizizwe nge Zizwe emhlabeni wonke***

***Hayi ubuhle bendalo yomdali***

***Kwi Nzonzobila zolwandle***

***Ezintabeni emahlathini***

***Nasesibhakabhakeni***

***Ezintilini emathafeni***

***Buyabonakala ubuhle bendalo kaThixo***

***Kwizinto ngezinto ezisehlabathini***

Today as we gather in this Consultation, we raise our hands to thank God for the bold decision taken by our people in electing Rev Purity Malinga as our next Presiding Bishop. We believe that this moment is not only timeous but is inspired by God's Spirit. This was evidenced by the overwhelming support of our people throughout the connexion. It is a holy moment for in it, we can see what we can do when we transcend patriarchy, race, tribalism, and only see the image

of God deposited in all of us. We, as the BMC take pride in our role in allowing God to use us as a vehicle for discernment and participate with all our people in this gift to the church and nation. We commit ourselves as this movement to walk with her in the bright sunshine of a Karoo Summers day and lift her up in our prayers in the moments of wilderness in our common service to God. We further salute the Central Synod for the nomination of Rev Faith Whitbey and the Cape of Good Hope Synod for the nomination of Rev. Evert Moses and Rev Dlamini of this very same Natal West Synod who will be appointed by the ensuing Conference of the MCSA as Synod Bishops. We all express our prayers to the newly formed Synods and those who are nominated Rev M Molale and Rev. L Williams.

### **3. This is where we stand.**

***We are the Miracle that God made***

***To taste the bitter fruit of Time***

***We are precious.***

***And one day our suffering***

***Will turn into the wonders of the earth.***

***There are things that burn me now***

***Which turn Golden when I'm happy***

***Do you the mystery of our pain?***

***That we bear poverty***

***And are able to sing and dream sweet things***

***We bless things even in our pain***

***We bless them in silence.***

***That is why our music is so sweet***

***It makes the air remember,***

***There are secret miracles at work***

***That only time will bring forth***

***I too have heard the dead singing***

***They tell me that***

***Life is good***

***They tell me live it gently***

***With fire and hope***

***There is wonder here.***

***The sky is not an enemy***

***Destiny is our friend.***



My fellow BMC members I refer us to these mystical words of our Brother Ben Okri because in a world that seeks to obscure and erase the memory of Blackness and being African, under the guise of neutral universalism which is nothing more than the hegemony of white supremacy, privilege and neoliberalism; it is crucial to connect with the mystery of Blackness, its divine origin, its struggle with pain, its ability to sing the beauty of life in the presence of death, its death-defying hope and imagination of destiny that betrays the tragedy of the now.

I evoke this imaginative memory because I refuse to see the world through any other eyes except the eyes of my reality and that of my people. I do so because I know that the church that told me that Jesus loves me once also told me I'm not civilised enough to be at the main table. I remember because I know it is true of my church what Achille Mbembe says about being black in modernity; he says ***"The Black man is in effect the ghost of modernity"*** (A Mbembe: 2013:129). It is a history and modernity in which the word Black ***"designated not human beings"***

***like all others, but rather a distinct humanity – one whose very humanity was, and still is in question."***

In the midst of her questioned and scared humanity, Black Africa had hopes, imagination and praxis towards a different world. The hope, imagination, and praxis towards the destiny which is our friend, Africa is inspired and illuminated by these black people who Mbembe calls "***Fertilizers of history and subjects beyond subjection."***

I always live in tension with the Bible because it was once used as a tool not only to rob me of my land but to strip me of my dignity, my worth, my metaphors and my language. The Bible and the Christian faith that it propagated through zealous missionaries gave me a mirror that reflected a barbaric that needed salvation rather than a human being with dignity. This meant a loss of identity as one is chasing of a mirage of civilisation in which one could never fully belong.

This racism has metamorphosed into a different expression of being identified not by our worth but by how useful we are to the gods of the market and how cheap black lives are in the hierarchy of life.

We say the above not merely as a retelling of a story but as an intellectual, psychological, sociological, economical and thus Spiritual stance for our interpretation of the Word of God and engagement with the questions of life in a world which is hostile to who we are, as it does not recognise our presence. It is with this stance that we approach our theme for this consultation.

#### **4. Burning to Light up for God's Justice.**

My fellow BMC members we gather this year under the theme: Burning to Light up for God's Justice. It is a theme that has a definitive connection to the reading in Matthew 5. It is my wish to share with you general comments around the theme as it stands and then allow the scripture to speak to us in a cursory reading.

The first word, ***Burning***, of our theme is a verb that is built on the word "***burn***," which means to be or set on fire. Which includes feeling hot, being passionate, to use the purpose for heat, light, or power. It also is about a blaze, flame, glow or sometimes for the purpose of light. Inherent in the idea of burning is that light, flame, or glow comes when something is consumed. If there is going to be any burning, there must be a material that is to be consumed, for example, coal or wood. The potential to burn pre-exists the burning. In many ways, that which is burning expresses its full potential in the burning rather than conservation of self. There is light, warmth, power because something is burning; being consumed.

In our theme, the burning is so that we light up. In the process of lighting up is the gift of making sight possible. It is the ability to illuminate, which also means making it easy to understand. The burning, therefore, is intended to give light and the only time that light is needed is when there is darkness. In some way, light is a rebellion against the power of darkness. Where darkness seems to abound, those who believe in the power of light seek the consumables for in them with

ignition light dispels the power of darkness. It is light that exposes the folly of stupidity, ignorance and death.

The light, the illumination we refer to here is not neutral light that simply is put on because it is time for the light. It stands for something, it has a purpose bigger than itself, it is a servant of a cause that is nobler than itself. It is illumination for God's Justice. It refuses to allow injustice to have the last word. When the darkness of injustice that finds its way into the power corridors of life this light stands up and say I might be alone like a candle in the dark night and the wind might be blowing I still cry out "this little light of mine I'm gonna let it shine." Its light for God's Justice where bigotry and hate seem to win. It is justice that knows what Plato says about Justice, it knows what Aristotle says about Justice, it knows what Socrates says about Justice, it knows what Karl Marx, John Engels and John Rawls says about Justice yet it knows a God, who, when Naboth lost not only his property but also his life raised the prophet Elijah and said to him ***“ Tell him, (Ahab) I the Lord say, say to Him, after murdering the man, are you taking over his***

*property as well,.....in the very place that the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth they will lick up your blood”* 1Kings 21: The justice of God is never neutral whilst the poor and defenceless are murdered by the powerful and their property taken. It is the Justice of God that cries out in Micah: ***" The faithful have been swept from the land; not one upright person remains, everyone lies in wait to shed blood;..... the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire-"*** ( Micah 7:2-3). It is this God who cries out in Amos ***"There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in the court and detests the one who tells the truth. You levy a straw tax on the poor and impose a tax on their grain.....there are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts. The prudent keep quiet in such times, for the times are evil.....But let Justice Roll like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream"*** ( Amos 5: 10- 22). It is this Justice that he puts in the lips of a single young woman who is to be pregnant before she is married, she ***declares "He has brought down rulers from their thrown but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things***

***but has sent the rich away empty-handed"*** (Luke: 1:52-53). It is this justice that we are called to light up by burning.

### **The Text: Matthew: 5:1-17**

I have no intention of spending too much time on exegetical work except to make the following general comments.

I trust that the fact the Gospels are a product of a time of oppression is important to all serious Bible readers but for me whose Blackness is a reflection of the world of Slavery, Colonialism and apartheid the rebellious voice of the Gospel against the Emperor and the culture of death of the empire is indispensable. From my standpoint, I can only read the Gospel as a counter to the culture and the power of the empire.

When we read chapter 5 in Matthew alert to the overbearing presence of the empire and its surrogates in Judea we can see the power of the words of Christ as a counterforce to the power of the emperor and the religious leaders.

The Book of Matthew from the moment of the birth of Jesus creates an apparent tension between the power of the centre and the vulnerable commitment of the periphery. The need to justify the place of the baby Jesus through the genealogy narrative, the terror that the prophesy of the birth of Jesus who is immediately connected to the prophetic tradition of Israel, the de-centering of divinity away from the palace and Temple and centering it with the people “God is with us” and away from Jerusalem to a stable in Bethlehem. The deviousness and cunning nature of those in power is exposed in the tricks played, by Herod. He knows the promises of God and uses false piety as a cover to plan death and destruction. Exile becomes a reality in the presence of the brutality of those in power.

From the external struggles, Jesus through temptations his internal demons ending up with the Baptism as a total embrace of who he is in God and the world that God wants him to be part of. By the time he starts his public ministry in Galilee and begins to call his disciples, the pattern is set: Jesus Christ is a threat to those in power because he represents a different kingdom.



By the time you get to Chapter 5, you must be alert to the contrast that the Jesus movement is casting over against those who have religious and socio-economic power. This is important as it takes away our over-spiritualization of chapter 5.

The end of chapter 4 creates an unease for those in power because there is one called Jesus, who in an empire where the possibility of rebellion is an ever-present reality and being surrounded by crowds always create suspicion, Mathew records "***And Great Crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him***" (Matt. 4:25.)

Jesus begins to teach in that reality and begins to teach that which is counter to the power of the empire and those who benefit from the power structure. In the blessings of God are not only a blessing to those who receive them but also a repudiation of those who cause the basis of the blessing. Surrounded by those who follow him in the midst of those who represent a power of domination and destruction, he declares:

***Blessed are the poor in spirit theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven***

***Blessed are they who mourn for they will be comforted***

***Blessed are the meek they will inherit the land***

***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness they will be satisfied***

***Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy***

***Blessed are the clean of heart for they will see God.***

***Blessed are the peacemakers ..they will be called the children of God***

***Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

In this sermon, the powerful do not find peace. Jesus creates a very troubling image to his followers and the crowd. This is a vision of God that is counter to their vision of power.

In the Vision of Jesus, God, Heaven, and history is not on the side of the rich but on those who are poor. God's comforting presence is not on the side of the powerful and those who wound and kill but on the side of those who mourn. The land does not ultimately belong to those who are arrogant and dominating, but those who are meek. Satisfaction is not found in those who are unjust, conceited, and indifferent, but those who thirst for Justice. Peace does not belong to those who live by violence but by those who live in search of peace, a just peace. The Kingdom of God does not belong to those who persecute nor those who are too afraid to stand for that which is righteous but for those who endure persecution for the sake of righteousness.

Matthew as if to emphasize the last point and also bringing it to home in the choice that those listening must make; it is me Jesus or those who are representing a different vision, not a vision of life but a vision of death. It moves away from generalities to a choice to be made right now, and the consequences of that choice: Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you ... because of me. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be celebrated in heaven. And then he

connects it to the great prophetic tradition they persecuted prophets who were before us. This is a vision of God's justice.

It is only after this precise vision casting and contrasting that we hear then the famous words "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste.....it is no longer good for anything..." Matthew 5:13. This is not our focus for today except to note that those who follow the Jesus that Matthew puts before us in this text but be ready and willing to dissolve in the midst of injustice so that the Justice of God must stand a chance. This demands that we know that self-preservation is antithetical to the purpose of our existence.

Then we get the words our theme is derived from: **You are the Light of the world**. As I indicated above, for there to be light, there must be some burning. That burning will provide light to show the way, it will provide illumination that leads to understanding. The words of Jesus do not ask of his followers to look for the light outside of themselves, they are not to look for some energy utility out there. They, in who they are, and who they continue to choose to *be 'are the light of*

*the world.'* They are not the source of light, no, *they are the light.* They do not only light for themselves but for the world. Their power is not finding purpose in themselves but in benefiting the World. It is a contradiction if not a betrayal of purpose for light to be hidden or put under a bushel basket. Light is serving its purpose when "it gives light to all in the house," the house of God is the world of God. In the essence of who you are as light and in your choices you make as light the glory of God, your father is revealed for others to see.

The BMC must take upon itself the responsibility to be the light within the life of the MCSA to contribute in the MCSA and the broader Christian ecumenical movement be the light of the world. This so that all of us can Burn to light up for God's Justice.

For this to happen the BMC and the Church, in general, must take seriously the call of God's Justice, which was given to us through the prophetic tradition and personified in Jesus Christ. This burning for God's Justice must take on board that in the burning to light up for God's Justice in a world of profound injustice we must be ready to be the very material to be burnt so that

there is light. For a follower of Christ, there is no solace in safety. Like a candle as our sister Alice Walker reminds, you cannot provide light without burning and melting away. We are the burning material to provide light for God's Justice in the World. If we do not burn, melt away, we cannot be the light of God in the world. This kind of giving up of self for the burning to light up God's Justice is recognised by Arch Bishop Oscar Romero when he writes about the pastors of the church ***“A Pastor does not wish for security when it is not Given to his flock” (Romero: 1972)***, God’s Justice cannot be seen if the church is safe in the cause of Justice, the Burning to light up for God’s Justice, demands of the church to provide that life by being prepared to be consumed so as to be the light. It is my belief that Oscar Romero further embodies this need to be light in his October 1977 Homily when he says the call of the time is ***“comforting the victims, repudiating the crime, supporting the just demands of the people, giving hope to the people, and announcing the transcendence of God, beyond all our goals”***.

Made uncomfortable by this call in a world where Justice is trampled upon by the dehumanising reality of our time, the BMC must seek to deepen where it stands. In a world where the market as a god with all its high priests demand absolute loyalty and value is measured not by our dignity but by our usefulness to the market, the BMC empowered by its history of being exploited and fertilized, as Achille Mbebe would put it, by the life and work of those who were subjects beyond subjugation, must decide whether it wants to be on the side of life or worship the god of death. Once it chooses to be on the side of Justice, it then must be willing to Burn to light up for God's Justice. In that regard, let me make the following comments:

- We are thrilled by the signs of a resurrection of our movement in the different synods of our connexion. This with particular reference to HIESWA Synod and Queenstown Synod.
- We are also taking special pride in our elevation of the gender justice matters that we deal with in the life of the BMC, the church, and society at large. We are looking forward to the

execution of our resolutions on the matter and the adopted agenda from our Gender transformation work of the 2018 Consultation.

- We feel honoured that our work on leadership development through the Leadership Symposium held at the end of 2018 received overwhelming support in our sister organisations in our church. We could, in a direct programmatic way, express our common agenda.
- Aware of the challenges that we faced in pursuit of our agenda to elevate Black thought we must find ways to create and build momentum to this work as a contribution to the future of our church.
- The scourge of racism and tribalism continues to be a stubborn reality of our times, thus demanding a consistent fight from us in all forms and all places to defeat them.

The BMC, if it is to Burn and light up for God's Justice and influence the MCSA to burn and light up for God's justice, must embrace the challenge posed to the church by none other than



Bishop Oscar Romero when he proclaimed: ***"It would be a sad church that only condemns, that only sees sin outside of itself, without recognising that it too is sinful"*** (Romero 1979).

With that in mind, the BMC must confess its shortcomings to be the light.

- In all our last four Consultations we paid lip service to the call to centre the needs of the poor in the agenda of the BMC and thus the church. We have been preoccupied at best by a search for charity rather than a quest for Justice. In Port Elizabeth, in 2017 we called for a remodelling of Mission and our organisational life so that the cries of those in the margins are allowed to disturb our false piety and force us to be agents of the fundamental transformation of our people's lives and enliven their agency. That work has not taken off. In truth, we have been seduced by the trappings of middle-class existence where the poor even in our church life are there to elicit pity rather than a radical commitment to a change of life. We have allowed race to blind us to the reality of class exploitation in our midst. We have become intellectually lazy in thought around

the plight of the poor, we have become morally indifferent to the hunger pangs of our people, and we have lacked vision and courageous action to change the lives of the poor. There is no urgency beyond charity in our church programs. The BMC does, and rightly so, spend money and host symposiums on racism, diversity and on leadership. Where is our call for a symposium on poverty eradication? We stand on top of the mountain when racists insert their racism in our public space yet we are silent when thousands of our people lose their jobs, and the investors and company bosses declare dividends that make them live in opulence. Where is our moral outrage when the poor, who are Black in this connexion, are left behind in an economy which is 90% owned by the top 10% of the nation. Where is our moral outrage when the ranks of those who live below the bread line are growing by the day? Where is our moral outrage when the gap between the rich and the poor is rising, and we live in the most unequal of society and generation? Where is our God language to speak into this reality with courage and vision? Have we

become too comfortable as the BMC, as the church and society with the status quo and thus worship the gods of indifference?

Linked to this is the silence and complicity of our movement in the marginalisation of the poor even in our own church. The poor are rendered invisible in the church except at the moment that they need to give us their last Rand, even if that risks their ability to have a loaf of bread in the morning. When the BMC chooses silence who will speak of that poor old lady who lives on a pension and must make sure that their pledge card is up to date otherwise if not their burial will not be at church regardless of their commitment and loyalty to the church and their spiritual maturity? Who speaks for the poor old man who is ignored because he does not have the resources that make those who lead the church to be on their side?

When the church is silent, who speaks for the homeless who are being criminalised in Cape Town? When the church is silent, who speaks for the poor, who are black, who die

in the hands of criminals in the Cape Flats? When the church is muted who speaks and stand with that little boy little girl who is being abused in the homes, streets, schools and even churches throughout our connexion?

When the Church is silent, who speaks for the poor and the marginalised in the Kingdom of ESwatini? When the church is silent? Who speaks for the poor in Lesotho while the elite are fighting factional fights in a political party in power?

Poverty is a reality that strips the dignity of God's people and is not an accident of history but is produced by the gods of death who control our world. If the BMC, the church is going to Burn and light up for God's Justice, it has to take a stand against poverty in word and praxis.

- In an article published on 8 July Songezo Zibi reminds us of how we Black people have betrayed the cause of blackness by allowing ourselves to be tricked into unprincipled

black loyalty where we allow the worst amongst us to hide their predatory behaviour in comparing themselves to the worst of white people; as if the worst of whiteness is the measure for black people to follow. We do this even at the expense of those who are black and strive for excellence. We throw them to the wolves, we ostracised those who stand for truth as to be seen with them is costly. We allow corruption in societies, circuits and synods to thrive in black hands thus proving that in Verwoerd was correct black people can't lead and can't govern.

- We must accept the truth that we have abandoned the quest to build institutions that form black lives and transmit values of justice and service to others. Even our family structure has become smaller and insular. Our churches have become stages for bickering and power plays rather than centres of healing and service to others.

- The BMC must also accept the truth that in the conversation around the new Synod boundaries, we have been followers, reactors rather than shapers of the conversation. This is despite the fact that as early as in 2005 in the Grahamstown Consultation at Fort Hare the matter was placed on record for the BMC. This has created a tendency for us to be ill-equipped to engage intelligently on this work of the church. This resulted on our impotency and inability to deeply engage on things that are dear to us which include concerns around the consolidation of tribalism, the isolation of the poor in parts of the connexion which can entrench poverty in those areas whilst consolidating the power of the rich in the church and the possible death of diversity in other districts. This also affects our own structural presence in these new Synods and thus making us incapable of impacting in those places.
- I confess the BMC's lacklustre response in the fight for Justice of for those in the LGBTQI+ movement. Our voices have been muted; where we speak we speak in hush tones. Our

intolerance of racism does not match our intolerance of homophobia. It is as if we rank the injustice of racism as higher than that of homophobia. We seem to accept a hierarchy of injustice. We seem to have forgotten the words of Martin Luther King JR, who said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to Justice everywhere."

If we are to burn to light up for God's Justice, it is my humble call that we do at least the following:

- The BMC and the MCSA be part of an initiative of a broad-based movement for poverty eradication in our connexion. This movement can begin by the BMC convening a colloquium on poverty eradication which will combine Methodist thinkers in the socio-economic sphere, social entrepreneurs, public policy thinkers and most importantly theologians who all can help us understand the depth of the matter and begin to set the agenda for the church through which we can engage society.
- In the fight against the injustices of patriarchy and the conscientisation of young boys in the new models of masculinity the BMC must seek to engage with the YMG and the

youth unit so as to develop a comprehensive strategy of advocacy, teaching and mentoring so that the next generation of men are given different models of being men.

- BMC to advocate for the MCSA to engage the matter of the LGBTQI+ as a matter of Justice and dignity. To create spaces in the BMC and in the MCSA general for the marginalises voices to be heard with dignity and power. The BMC must learn the truth that indeed, language does heal, but it can also hurt. It can include but also exclude and marginalise. One of the things that I am learning is to ask myself who am I including who am I excluding in my power to name. When I say brothers and sisters, who am I including and who am I excluding? Are those who are queer included or excluded and most importantly do they feel included or excluded? Does burning to light up for God's Justice not demand of the BMC to be at the forefront of finding new healing and inclusive language?
- The presiding Bishop has called on us to Shape Tomorrow today, with special emphasis to the children in our midst. The BMC must be in the forefront of the struggle to have a



church in all levels that open up for the child. This will include the space for the child to be protected from all injustice and creating a just future by acting for justice now.

- The BMC must strengthen the work of its Structures Committee to keep track of the development of the new Synods and have early detection so as to help the church intervene in moments that compromise all the things we hold dear in the quest to light up for God's Justice.

## **Conclusion**

My fellow BMC members as I conclude I go back to where we started. I believe for us to light up for God's Justice, we must be ready to burn ourselves. This we can do because, for the Black people, Christianity has always been a point of imaginative reference. Achille Mbembe puts it well in his book, **the critique of Black reason** when he *writes “Christianity that most shapes thought of African origin is the triple pattern of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection- of sacrifice and redemption..... reveals a conception of God and his relationship to suffering*

***humanity that that defines the latter as a relationship of Justice, freedom and unconditional recognition.....in order to make itself a sign of salvation the black race must become a community of faith, conviction, and reciprocity" (Mbembe:2013:115).***

So we are going to burn to light up for God's Justice because Ben Okri is right we are the miracle that God has made to taste the bitter fruit of time, and we know that one day our suffering will turn into the wonders of the earth for in our suffering redemption is born. We are going to burn and light up for God's Justice because though there are things that burn us now we know they turn golden. We will burn to light up for God's Justice because Ben Okri is correct; there is a mystery in our pain, in the midst of bearing poverty we are able to sing and dream sweet things. We will burn to light up for God's Justice because Ben Okri is correct our soul is too deep for bitterness because we bless things even in our pain. We will burn to light up for God's Justice because we are never defeated by death; we too have heard the dead sing, telling us to live life

with fire and hope. We will burn to light up for God's Justice for we know that destiny is our friend.

We will burn to light up for God's Justice because we have been invited by the one who said we are the salt of the earth; we are the light of the world. He did say as part of the invitation we must know our blessing comes in the moment of persecution for righteousness sake; we must burn and light up because in the midst of insults and falsehoods I must rejoice and be glad for ours is the kingdom of heaven and it is our reward. We will burn to light up for God's Justice in a world of injustice, oppression, and exploitation for to light up the world, to light up God's house for Justice the light for Justice cannot be put under the bushel basket. It must be set on a lampstand to light up the house. May the BMC never betray the cause of God's Justice. May it never tire in service for God's Justice. May the BMC burn itself to light up the MCSA and our connexion for God's Justice. God bless us all.

