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Department of Public Works  
North West Provincial Government  
Republic of South Africa

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**ADDRESS BY MRS BOMO EDNA MOLEWA, PREMIER OF NORTH WEST PROVINCE, AT THE MASS PRAYER SERVICE LED BY ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 30 SEPTEMBER 2007, MMABATHO STADIUM, MAFIKENG.**

**DATE:** SUNDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2007

His Grace, Bishop, Dr Barnabas Lekganyane

Elders and Members of the Zion Christian Church Council

Members of the Executive Council of the North West Provincial Government

Councilors, Members of Provincial Legislatures and Members of Parliament

ZCC Congregants, Fellow Worshipers, Fellow South Africans

Khotsong!

I am immensely honoured to once again welcome His Grace, Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane back to the North West Province. Two years ago, His Grace, Bishop Lekganyane graced us with his presence at Odi Stadium in Mabopane as we prayed in unison for the safe return of our dear sister, missing Constable Francis Rasuge. As it turned out, Francis has so far not been found, and the courts have since declared her dead and his murderer appropriately sentenced to life in prison.

We used that occasion to highlight the critical role that leaders of many faiths, especially the Christian Church, played in the struggle for the liberation of our country, as well as during the transition to democracy. With specific reference to His Grace, Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane, we recalled the period in April 1992 when it was to him that three of the country's most prominent leaders at the time, Nelson Mandela of the ANC, FW de Klerk of the National Party and then State President, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the IFP, turned for prayers. The country was in the grip of low intensity warfare amidst allegations of so-called black-on-black violence, and very few could imagine that two years down the line there would be a peaceful election conducted.

Your Grace, Bishop Lekganyane

Of course, this is not the first time that you have helped turn this Mmabatho Stadium into the biggest Mass Prayer Service that our province has ever witnessed. Three years ago, it was to you that we turned when we were celebrating ten years of democracy. We know that when the time comes in the future for us to request your indulgence one more time, you will not turn us back. You will receive us with the warmth that we know you for. May the good Lord continue to bless you as you continue to lead the more than four million congregants that constitute the Zion Christian Church. Your influence transcends national boundaries, and we look upon you to use your stature, as you have in the past, to preach goodness to all parts of the world where you are so capable of reaching.

That you are a very influential leader is beyond question, so much so that none other than the arch-conservative former state president of apartheid-era South Africa and the one person who presided over probably the most brutal period in our history, the late PW Botha, could not resist undertaking a pilgrimage to the Zion City Moria. Of course, he had other, sinister political motives. You proved then as you continue to this day that when you say you are politically non-partisan you mean it.

Indeed, your congregation of more than four million members is constituted of people from different political persuasions and ideological inclinations, all brought together by a common desire to worship under your able leadership.

We revere and admire you for your vision and courageous leaderships. Where many would have fallen into the temptation to abuse their position of power and influence over so many, you have continuously stood firm on the principles that have stood you and the Zion Christian Church in good stead.

Khotso, A E Ate, Masiono!

We owe His Grace, Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane, a huge debt of gratitude for he has taken it upon himself to lead the brigade for moral regeneration in this country without ever being asked to do

so. We are indebted to him because he continues to pray for us in the midst of all the difficulties that bedevil our fledgling democracy.

We must also pray to the Almighty that He spares and blesses him for many years to come.

Our country has been through some of the most serious trials and tribulations. We have witnessed some of the worst cases of human rights violations. The apartheid regime of the past turned the state machinery upon the black majority, just so that the abundant natural, mineral and other resources of this wealthy country could be enjoyed by a tiny minority. In the course of this plunder, thousands of lives were lost unnecessarily. Millions were denied basic services.

When democracy ultimately dawned, we were all looking forward to living in peace and tranquility. We envisioned a country in which communities could walk freely in their neighbourhoods, any time of the day or night. We envisioned a society in which the human rights of women, children and the elderly would be respected by all. We envisioned a country in which personal growth, prosperity and accumulation of property would be respected.

In many ways, we have made significant strides compared to the prior to 27 April 1994. In certain ways, unfortunately, we are facing some of the most worrying instances of moral degeneration and crime.

How is it that a young woman, as is the case with Francis Rasuge, can just disappear without trace? How is it that a father can rape his own daughter, not to mention his neighbours? How is it that rather than hand a suspected criminal over to the law enforcement agencies, communities would rather mete out kangaroo mob justice?

What has come of the country that the Congress of the People defined by way of the Freedom Charter in 1955? Was it for this unsafe and violent society that our mothers marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956?

The Bible as well as our own African norms and values teach us to respect human life, dignity and property. They teach us to treat our neighbours' children as ours. Our guiding principles of ubuntu/botho provide that the young should respect their elders, regardless of whether these are

their biological parents or not. These same principles decree that men should honour, respect and protect their womenfolk and girl children.

The society we live in at the moment is generally making a mockery of all these teachings and more. Rather than have compassion for the poor and the most vulnerable, we have cases reported of public servants that steal child support and other social grants for their own greedy purposes. Rather than get them in touch with those with the means to help them out, we read stories of people that take advantage of the elderly and people with disabilities.

What has our world come to?

When we were growing up, even in the midst of apartheid misrule, we knew that we could count on the protection of any male adult should the need ever arise. Nowadays not only is this fact in doubt, we in fact, have no choice but to educate our little girls from a very early age to run very fast if an adult stranger ever tries to be nice.

In the good old days, the main reason our houses had to have doors was so that wild animals would not stray inside while we slept peacefully. During the hottest seasons of the year we would even sleep on the veranda, with the least worry in the world that other people were monitoring our movements, waiting to pounce as and when we would not be looking.

The very poor in society knew they could approach the well-off, and in exchange at times for offering their labour, be fed and clad. The need would never arise where they would feel the need to dispossess others of their private means.

The society that brought us up is the one for which we are yearning.

We are yearning for the time when our youth would know that regardless of the fact that their parents may not be as educated as they are, they are still deserving of their respect and admiration. Our youth need to appreciate the value and benefits of old age and experience. We yearn for the time when the doors of dialogue could be unlocked between our young and old, so that our young get to appreciate what it is that has preserved the old to a point where they are able to reflect on their experience.

Our country is ravaged by the scourge of HIV and AIDS. The most vulnerable and worst affected in this regard are our youth. If the youth do not get a grip, there is a very real possibility that whole generations could be decimated before they reach adulthood. We call on our youth to heed the advice of their parents and experts, and to conduct themselves in responsible fashion.

We call on the men of our country to reclaim their rightful position in society as protectors of the very old and most vulnerable. If men take up the challenge to influence our boys positively, then we shall be poised for a society of young men with a positive outlook on life, boys with the utmost respect for the moral outlook of society. Such a society will ensure we prevail against all misdirected militancy, and have our energies focused on the reconstruction and development of this beautiful country of ours.

We call on our womenfolk to reclaim their role as the mothers and nurtures of society. Our girl children should be dissuaded from such behaviour as drugs and prostitution for those will only lead them to an early death. If, as women we play our role model roles appropriately, these girls will be able to tell that there is more to life than short-lived glamour.

As we try and work our way out of the abyss of doom and gloom that seem to be characteristic of our current situation, it is to you all that we turn our attention. We all know that in order that giant leaps are made, we should start with those small baby steps. This Mass Prayer Service is one such case of baby steps.

It was the world-renowned author, Paolo Coelho that once said if you focus hard enough on something that you really wish to achieve, the whole universe joins you in your hopes and wishes, and you ultimately realise those ambitions.

As we gather here today, joined as we are by His Grace, Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane, members of the ZCC Church Council as well as our leaders from different spheres of government, we are indeed in one mind that our country should know and experience peace, security, tranquility and prosperity. We know the universe knows we truly and honestly want to see this realized. We know the good Lord hears our prayers. And, we know, soon rather than later, we shall overcome.

Like me, I know you are looking forward to hearing what His Grace has to offer us today. May the Mass Prayer turn out to be the success that we all expect it to become.

I thank you all.

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