

**AFRICAN GOSPEL CHURCH
MESSAGE BY
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DELIVERED BY
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MAR GATE :

It gives me great pleasure to send to the African Gospel Church my congratulatory message and my best wishes for the Easter season. Today we are celebrating the mystery of resurrection and the hope of our salvation, through the efforts of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. It is a time in which we pause on the meaning of redemption and the great hope that that generates in our souls. It is a time of spiritual renewal, because we can feel how each of us is transported into the process of that of resurrection. Through this process we contemplate the enormous sacrifice that our Redeemer made, to save us from our own sins. However, we also contemplate what we can do to redeem ourselves from our own sins, because of the strength he gave to us.

The cycle of resurrection is emblematic of what each of us can individually do, and what we can do together collectively, to move from a bad situation to a better one. It is the path through which we can be reborn into something better, which is cleansed from the imperfection of what we were, and aspire to a higher level of perfection. I hope that the fact that Easter takes place this year, just three days before one of the most important elections our Country has ever held, and is emblematic of a similar process of renewal and

regeneration. It is important that South Africa as a whole conceives the courage of a new beginning, and the hope of a better future.

We need to have such a hope to be able to overcome our present problems, especially those of HIV/Aids, corruption, crime, unemployment and poverty. These problems affect each of us, and can only be solved through the people of goodwill of South Africa coming together and joining forces. Government alone cannot solve these problems, especially those of HIV/Aids and crime. We need to change the attitude of our people and create a process of spiritual renewal, which will enable our people to strengthen the bonds of social solidarity, so as to respond to the cries of HIV/Aids and eradicate crime and corruption from the hearts and minds of those who practice them.

I hope that during this Season of hope and spiritual renewal, all South Africans can focus on what we need to do together, to build a better future for our country. I dream of South Africa becoming a country of excellence, rather than remaining a country of mediocrity, perpetually engulfed in the problems of HIV/Aids, corruption, crime, unemployment and poverty. I do not wish our children and grandchildren to have to deal with these problems, as if they were our legacy to them. I dream of a society in which our children and grandchildren can look upon the problems of HIV/Aids, corruption, crime, unemployment and poverty as the bad memories of a distant past, in the same way and fashion as today we look upon apartheid, racial oppression and colonialism, as bad memories of a distant past.

There is a great deal of work ahead for the people of goodwill. It is important that the people of goodwill do not stand by the sideline, but make their voice heard and participate in the building of our society. The next elections are an opportunity for everyone to make such a contribution. I urge everyone to vote at the next elections and concentrate on what can be done to make South Africa a better place because, after all, bad governments are those which are elected by good people who did not vote. Beyond the elections, I hope that the spirit of Easter may continue throughout the year, and inspire South Africans to become more caring and more loving. We need a more caring government. We need more caring leaders, and we need more care, human solidarity and genuine brotherhood within each of our families, workplaces and communities. We need to build a more caring society. We come from a past of dehumanization in which relationships between us, as South Africans, were not human.

We live in a country in which abuse, violence and the arrogance of man on man are still common. We must move into a future in which human relationships are characterized by care and mutual respect. The message of Easter is one of salvation within the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The core of such teaching was indeed the message of love. Love is the tool on which redemption can be brought about. I hope that our future society may become more inspired by love, and less animated by greed, hate and lack of respect. We need to practice love in a greater measure within our families, workplaces and communities so as to make ours a society which cares for those who need, and those who suffer.

I wish to extend to all the members of the African Gospel Church my greatest sympathy and good wishes. I regret that I cannot be with you today to share worship and devotions, as I would have liked to. It was just not possible for me to do so. However, my thoughts, spirit and prayers are with you, and I pray with you for the blessing of God Almighty on our people and our Country. May God assist us in eliminating the problems of HIV/Aids, corruption, crime, unemployment and poverty and lead South Africa into a new season of hope, renewal and salvation. May God bless all of you.

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