

**GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES
AGAPE-WAY BIBLE AND TRAINING CENTRE
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF "THE LIVING WAY MINISTRIES"**

**REMARKS BY MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI,
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Your Majesty, the Master of Ceremonies, Pastor Hayseed Stephens and members of his delegation from Living Way Ministries - Pastors: Larry Scoggin, Albert Fuentes, Roger McDuff, John McDuff, Dr Richard Nash, Jim Britt, Leland Burkett and Larry White, and all members of the team from the United States; members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, senior officials of Ulundi, Pastor Appelgrijm, ladies and gentlemen.

My first duty is to welcome Pastor Hayseed Stephens and all our brothers who have come with him from the United States, and who have come to do us such a good turn, prompted by Agape. Pastor Stephens is no stranger amongst us. He is God's servant who has ministered to our King and his Royal family, who has ministered to me and my family, who has ministered to members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and the Zulu people, over so many years. He has over the years become one of God's tangible blessings to us.

We are grateful that on this very important occasion of the ground-breaking ceremonies he has come to us with so many brothers, whose very presence in our midst is another blessing to us.

We do believe that Pastor Stephens is God's missionary amongst us. We have clearly seen the Hand of God in all that he has been doing for so many years amongst the Zulu people. He has been doing what he has been doing prompted only by this great love known as Agape. Agape began as a love feast which was held by early Christians in connection with the Lord's supper. This word has generally been taken in the Christian world as meaning Christian love, or brotherly love.

Our big brother is the Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life because He first loved us and He not only said this, He went on to demonstrate it and gave up His life for us, for nothing in return, not to get anything for Himself. In the Gospel according to St. John 15: 9-17:¹

¹ From the Thompson Chain Reference Bible : New International Version

9. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.
10. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love.
11. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
12. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you.
13. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
14. You are my friends if you do what I command.
15. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.
16. You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.
17. This is my command - Love each other.

So our brother Pastor Hayseed Stephens and our brothers who are here with us in Ulundi on this historic occasion, have carried out that command in demonstrating this love for the Zulu people.

I consider this event as something that is happening at the right time. The Zulu people have a very colourful history. The Zulu people are famous as a people who came from a warrior stock. Pastor Hayseed Stephens' message and that of "The Loving Way Ministries" is that the Lord wants these people, known in the past as warriors, to become "soldiers of Christ."

This comes at a time when the Zulu people are being assailed by what I can only call the forces of darkness. The Zulu Nation has gone through quite a lot of tribulations in the last two centuries. The Zulu people have now turned against each other. There is not a single Nation amongst all of South Africa's various Nations which is involved in such hideous internecine violence as that in which the Zulu people are involved just at this time.

Since 1985, thousands of Zulus have died at the hands of other Zulus. Not one day passes without a Zulu man, woman or child being shot with an A-K 47 rifle or other lethal weapons.

I consider what is happening here today as no less than providential. For God seems to be reminding us in this very unique way that in spite of all that we are suffering, that He is still a loving God. He has sent His servant Hayseed Stephens who is today accompanied by this team of God's servants, to come and minister to us, in this very unique way.

In spite of the shameful violence in the midst of which we have now lived for eight years, God's message to us through what is happening today is that He loves us. His message is that we should not be blinded by the hatred which so much bloodshed has generated amongst us - that He still loves us in spite of ourselves. He demonstrates even now that Christ came to save us as sinners. He is not looking at our transgressions but at how He can save us from our sins.

He is saying that He still loves us in spite of ourselves. There will rise a building here which will be a shining demonstration of Agape.

We thank the Lord for sending these servants of His to come and minister to the Zulu Nation at this very difficult time in the history of our Nation.

Our Brother and Saviour seems to be demonstrating that great prayer which He said for all Believers in St John 17: 20-21:1

20. My prayer is not of them alone, I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.
21. that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

This Centre will stand here as a challenge to us in the context of all these messages from our Lord.

We must face this challenge which this Centre will be to us, not only to us the Zulu people of our generation, but also to the Zulu people of coming generations.

Many Zulu families have suffered through the ongoing and endemic violence. To me it appears that the Lord is reminding us through this project what St Paul wrote to the Romans in Chapter 5, verses 1 to 5:1

1. Therefore since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
2. through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God
3. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance;
4. perseverance, character; and character, hope
5. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Pastor Stephens, and our brothers from the United States, you came to KwaZulu at a time when this area of KwaZulu/Natal is full of armed men, armed to the teeth in order to kill their own kith and kin. There are armed men who are deployed throughout the region of KwaZulu/Natal to kill their own people, for no reason except political differences. This is heart-rending to our King who sees his people, as someone who stands above the political arena as a constitutional monarch, slaughtering each other for no real rhyme or reason.

We are here together because of Love, which St Paul again discusses in his usual unique way in Chapter 13:4-7:

4. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
5. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.
6. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
7. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

In all these tribulations let us be strengthened again when we are reminded by St Paul again in his Letter to the Ephesians: 6:12-15:

12. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
13. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
14. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breast plate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace.

It is a matter of great inspiration for us to participate in this ground-breaking ceremony with our King and all the leaders of the Zulu people who are here today. We cannot adequately express our thanks to our brother Pastor Hayseed Stephens, who has been extremely patient in pursuing this project and who just refused to be frustrated by red tape within the Ulundi bureaucracy. For all these blessings, we can only praise the Lord's name.

We have become a God-forsaken country because our children have been taught to hate. A Centre which will rise up from this ground will be a place where we hope we can again try to teach each other that it is still possible to love in spite of what we have gone through. It is our youth who are being used in the war of hatred that our people are waging against each other. We have a whole lost generation of youth, who are illiterate and semi-literate, who are pawns of cynics in a so-called "people's war" in which black brother has turned against black brother and black sister against black sister.

We need this Centre and we will need many more throughout South Africa if seeds of love will spring once again in our communities. We thank God for the beginning which this Centre will be.

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