**Speaking Remarks of KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube during her visit at the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), Musgrave, Durban, 5 November 2022**

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Mam M Thwala

Mfundisi TG Mwelase

Mrs N Mzini

The Faithful of UCCSA

Brothers and Sisters

It is an honour and a privilege to have been invited to be part of this gathering of Masakhane being hosted by the historic oMama BoManyano.

To be in the presence of believers such as oMama, is to walk among those who give birth and who in any definition are the closest demonstration that God is here and is alive.

If the human body is the Temple of God, the female body is truly Gods workshop.

It is through the body of a woman that God aligns Himself with life on Earth with only the female being able to grow and nurture life inside the body.

In placing us as women as such crucial vessels for creation, God defines women as vital to His project of populating the world.

So to be with you is truly like being home but more importantly to be among Inzalabantu without which none of us would be here.

We gather as we also celebrate 54 years since the establishment of Isililo Manyano Bomme.

The mandate of Isililo Manyano Bomme guided the organisation to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to win souls for Christ. This movement has encouraged the spirit of ecumenism amongst other churches and mostly to lead outreach and socio-economic development programmes.

This is a clear testimony of living your faith and the role of women not only as vessels for creation, but as agents of the Word of God.

In James 2: 17 is declared that faith without work is dead.

Today I want to bear testimony that as Omama boManyano, you are the true architects and working bees in God’s factory, examples that “Faith expresses itself in action.”

**Women are nation builders**

KunguMgqibelo sithi Malibongwe igama lamaKhosikazi oManyano! Sithi Malibongwe igama loMdali osigcine kwaze kwaba la!

Ukuba namaqhawekazi omthandazo, omama bomanyano kungikhumbuza uDavide kuMahubo 122:1 esethi: Ngajabula lapho bethi kimi masiye endlini kaJehova/

I rejoiced when they said to me let us go the house of the Lord.”

True to your mandate as God’s vessels, God’s Factoryworks, God’s worker bees today we witness the fruit of your labour as Isililo Manyano Bomme continues in deed and action to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to win souls for Christ.

This movement has encouraged the spirit of ecumenism amongst churches and leads outreach and socio-economic development programmes.

May, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the women of uManyano, a living institution that is at the heart of building our nation.

In addition to the above attributes, as OMama we are also nation builders

OMAMA beSililo bangabakhi bamakhaya anenjabulo nentokomalo. Kuyasithokozisa ukubona oMama bebambelele evangelini likaMasakhane, okuwuhlelo lapho singoMama boMthandazo esakhana futhi sikhulisane khona.

Ukukhulisana kwethu singoMama beSililo akusho ukuthi asizishaye indiva izinselelo esibhekene nazo emphakathini, emindenini yethu kane nasemishadweni yethu.

**Challenges facing women in church**

In the spirit of Masakhane, our task a women is also to us build homes for our families which are building blocks of community and society.

The burden on women is therefore heavy and this is why women find solace in each other through structures like Omama boManyano and programmes like Masakhane.

Beyond being a source of solace, comfort and a sounding board Masakhane programmes should also explore economic empowerment programmes for women. The economic empowerment of women is an urgent necessity. Women are the face of poverty when women are designed by God to be vehicles for prosperity. Women are victims of Gender Based violence when women should be Centre of community celebrations of Gods amazing work in creating human beings. This is why as government we are prioritising women for economic programmes ensuring that there is at least 50/50 % of the economy should in time be owned by women. For this to happen, women themselves should also use the energy and commitment of organisationa like Masakhane to agitate and find economic empowerment programmes especially in government.

Ngicela singafeli phakathi okwebutho uma sinezinkinga . Uma sibhekana nezimo futhi sizinqoba, lokho kuyosiza nalabo abeza ngemuva kwethu, ukuze bangangeni eziseleni esingene kuzo.

**Importance of Isililo Manyano Bomme**

Through Isililo Manyano Bomme, rural and township women can indeed become pillars of strength in ourcommunities.

To do this, over time, we must stay true to the word as our strength to shine the light unto our paths.

The word reminds to Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

We salute the Women of Manyano for remaining resolute during testing times of hardship and oppression.

Your journey is an inspirational one.

**Women as Prayer warriors**

One woman who is a member of the Manyano gathering had this to say about the importance of uManyano: Whenever I see a Manyano woman, I see a woman who has the world in her hands and has the power to make things change because of the power that is prayer.

In Manyano, women hold a very powerful weapon. Manyano women are prayer warriors. Prayer is the key to the Kingdom of God.

We have used prayer as an effective weapon to fight all forms of inequality, poverty and unemployment whenever these were experienced. Through prayer, they kept the faith and never despaired.

Furthermore, through the gendering of spirituality and missionary work, devout domestication ensured that women prayer meetings and gatherings were infused with tasks that overlapped with long-established ideas relating to motherhood, Christianity, and the personal life. However, omama boManyano have since reshaped their identities, and appeal to us to think differently about the workings of these intersections and how they offer complex understandings of motherhood.

Motherhood for black women has often come under strain within various political climates in South Africa. During colonialism and the tyranny of the apartheid state, motherhood for black women was often expressed through the iconography of the militarised mother, who was active in liberation politics.

Militarised motherhood, particularly for the black mother in apartheid South Africa, offered a different version of what it meant to be a political mother rather than reinforce narrow understandings of motherhood that were previously described and associated with Victorian motherhood.

Black motherhood came under the overreaching nature of apartheid violence, which meant that the site of struggle shifted to the home, the personal and community, a sphere in which women have responsibility and which they feel particularly obliged to defend.

This blurred the lines of where the public and private, the personal sphere began and redefined spaces where mothering took place. Furthermore, this destabilised Victorian ideal attached to motherhood and saw black women use unconventional spaces to confront the intimacy of apartheid violence.

It is then not surprising that spaces such as uManyano lomama transformed from a constrained and religion-infused domestic/private sphere to one which placed the treating of motherhood at the centre of South Africa’s public apartheid sphere using the church and their spirituality.

Prayer meetings, which are now well known as uLwesine lomama (Thursdays dedicated to prayer for omama boManyano) coincided with the day black domestic workers were off duty from the white households they worked in. This day of prayer has been the heartbeat to the mothering work of omama boManyano, as it was used to pray against the violence of apartheid rule and offered black women the space to devise theologies of survival.

They prayed for mental and physical strength to rise above social problems imposed on them by the repressive regime of the time.

The monies collected during the Manyano gatherings were used to send indigent children to school. This is how the spirit of Masakhane started and we are grateful that that benevolent spirit continues to this day.

We learn that in unity there is a blessing and anointing that flows to remove burdens on shoulders of women.

**Women are born leaders**

Women took leadership in their families whilst their husbands were digging for gold and other mineral resources.

This generation of ours needs new sheroes, and you are today’s gigantic Sheroes.

Siyabonga ukuthi oMama boManyano basaqhubeka nokusiza imiphakathi ehlwempu emiphakathini yethu.

Sinibonile ngesikhathi sobhubhane lwengculazi nilekelela imindeni ebilahlekelwe yizihlobo.

Kanigcinanga lapho, ngesikhathi seCovid-19 benisebenzisana nohulumeni ukushumayela ivangeli lokuzivikela kulolu bhubhane ngokugqugquzela ukugezwa kwezandla, ukuqhelelana kanye nokufakwa kwezifonyo.

Anibashiyanga dengwane abantu abakhahlamezwa yizikhukhula, sinibonile nelula izandla nibathandazela futhi nibasiza ngezingubo kanye nokuya ngasethunjini.

Iyababazeka imisebenzi yoMama boMthandazo futhi iyabonakala.

Women today still face different forms of hardships and oppression which are almost identical to those faced by their counterparts more than five decades ago.

It is very sad to witness that oMama boMthandazo in many of our churches today still face patriarchy and challenges inside the churches.

**Gender-based Violence and Femicide**

Outside the church buildings, they are confronted with Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, which makes it impossible for women to travel the streets and pathways of our townships and villages without fear.

Fellow congregants, as Manyano women, please pray for the final defeat and demise of GBVF, which continues to paint South Africa and our province in a negative light.

Recent statistics revealed that the rate of GBVF in South Africa is five times more than the rate prevailing globally.

This is shocking. Kumele lesi sihlava sokuhlukunyezwa nokubulawa kwabesifazane sisiqede sisavele ngekhanda.

We, who are the faithful, believe that what is impossible to man is possible to God. The Bible teaches us too that if God is on our side who can be against us!

You prayed for the downfall of apartheid, we urge you to pray and preach for an end to GBVF.

As we began Safety Month on Tuesday, 1 November, we ask you to pray for sanity to prevail on our roads so that the deadly carnages stop.

God has always used women to reveal his omnipresent love and caring nature.

We must follow in our destiny and God-given purpose. This movement should give birth to new leaders that grow other leaders because that how we create a great nation.

These days, we need to remind ourselves that we need to have conviction in everything that we do.

He used women like Ruth to show the resolute and steadfast nature of women in being faithful and resilient in building families and nations.

**OMama beSililo and community issues**

As women of Isililo Manyano Bomme, we are aware that you are in tune with the issues that affect the communities.

 Let us spread the word in our respective communities about the dangers of abusing drugs and alcohol, especially among youth.

We are also aware that many homes in KwaZulu-Natal are child-headed and female-headed and that puts more social and psychological burden on women and children in these communities.

Siyanicela ukuthi nikhulekele uhulumeni esiwuholayo owakhethwa yinina ukuthi uqhubeke nokuhola abantu ngobuqotho nangesizotha.

NjengoMama boMthandazo, siyacela nishumayele ivangeli lokuthula noxolo, nithandazele nohulumeni wenu esiwuholayo ukuthi ukwazi ukufeza izidingo zenu ngobuqotho.

Igama lamakhosikazi malibongwe, phambili nomama bomthandazo phambili.

Ayiqhubekele phambili inqola emasondosondo yoMama boManyano, Isililo Manyano Bomme.

I thank you.