

The time for the Church to heal our land from corruption is now

The levels of corruption driven by a sense of selfish entitlement to God's resources have reached alarming proportions in our country. If we, as the community, do not rise now and claim the right to be governed with ethical human respect, there will be no future for our children and generations to come.

If we cannot rise up and contribute as God's community to – as Martin Luther put it – learn to live together as brothers and sisters, we will perish together as fools. We have not loved this country enough. Our quietness has been so loud. We can no longer sit and watch political leaders mudslinging in our taxpayers' offices and chambers, fighting over issues that have nothing to do with service delivery, and sometimes disgracefully not finishing the business of the day.

It is time for the church to rise and fight corruption wherever it shows its ugly head. The people who lead must know now that the God-fearing community will not be quiet and continue to be complacent for ever. Fighting corruption cannot be left with law enforcement agents alone. We must all rebuke this evil.

Our local governments, our provincial leaders and national leadership of all political spectra, business, labour, churches and the broader community must know that we will fail to truly liberate this country if a self-cleansing exercise is not undertaken now. Corruption at all levels is a cancer that eats away at the realisation of the dream of a true democracy.

There is no layer of life that has escaped this level of deception, greed, dishonesty and fraud. Our social fabric is crumbling. The tendering processes has become a quick money-making scheme that has created instant richness to a few in the sea of poverty. At the same time temperatures are rising and dams are drying up, leaving people, businesses and farmers without water.

Daily service delivery strikes should worry us all because they are an indication of a leadership deficiency. Corruption destroys faithfulness, trustworthiness and gifted servanthood. It does not only scare away investment and jobs, but is also a curse on future generations. Whoever keeps quiet when he/she sees corruption happening is a real sell-out of the sacrificial struggle of our icons. As King Solomon said: *"When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan."*

There is no political party that can claim it has taken a strong enough stand against corruption and non-delivery, and no church can claim to have spoken out strongly enough. We have not done enough to speak out. We have succumbed to political mediocrity for fear of retribution, and, in the process, we have sold our souls.

We are an embattled society, where service delivery is substituted by opulence, partying and cheap political point scoring. Our people treated as voting fodder. The only time we see our leaders touching their constituencies is when they visit the hungry and poverty-stricken people to make unfulfilled promises in order to garner their votes.

The alarming proportions of corruption in our time have not only destroyed the interest and appreciation of society of political leadership, but has – more destructively – killed the interest of democracy within the inner man. To be inundated with incidents of such grotesque self-enrichment by elected officials is very damaging to our young democracy.

The appointment of friends and family members and the deployment of cadres at the expense of merits and efficiency has devastated this country. We do not deserve to be governed at this level of corruption. Pratibha Patil, once deplored, *“Corruption is the enemy of development, and of good governance. It must be got rid of. Both the government and the people at large must come together to achieve this national objective.”*

The Church must enter into days of Lent with fasting and ceaseless prayers for this beloved country and our leadership. This urgency cannot be overemphasised, especially as we face elections on May 8. We must pray for leaders who will not be easily bribed or give jobs to unqualified friends, family cadres. We must pray for leaders who will not give jobs for exchange of sexual favours. Leaders who will not be loose with the care of our beloved women and children in acts of human trafficking, drug abuse, heinous crimes and evil business deals. We pray for leaders who will take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them even if those acts are done by pastors.

We all pray: “give us leaders Lord who will stretch our visions vast and boundless, and we believe God is our Saviour and He is enough to heal our land and people!”

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