

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

The levels of corruption driven by selfish entitlement to God's resources have reached alarming proportions. If the community cannot 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. There is no layer of life that has escaped this level of deception, greed, dishonesty and fraud. Our social fabric is crumbling and we are all cut to the quick.

We are an embattled society, where service delivery is substituted by opulence, partying and cheap political point scoring with 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 for their votes to make unfulfilled promises. In some neglected communities, the reek of sewage and potholes have become the order of the day. Meanwhile the tendering processes have become a quick money scheme that have created instant richness to a few in the sea of poverty.

There is no political party that can claim it has taken a big 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 we have sold our souls.

If we cannot come 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.

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."*

This is the time for the Church to rise and fight the 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. There will come a time when we will deplete this country's resources if we do not rise now. Fighting corruption cannot be left with law enforcement agents alone. We must all rebuke this evil.

We do not have to look far to see shattering and disgraceful acts of corruption. Let us remember that not only the outside forces crumbled the Rome in the early first century. It crumbled from within because it was consuming more than it produced. When corruption

became the order of the day, with the state overspending and workers just pretending to be at work, the empire was rocked by labour shortages, oppressive tax and rising inflation. The gap between rich and poor widened, and the state eventually collapsed. To this end, Bella Davisson says, *“Political corruption is the decay of values and respect for the offices of government and processes of government itself.”*

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.

Today, it is only a person who prefers to be naïve who cannot see the risks inherent in the downgrading of the country or the growing budget deficit. 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 all of us because they are an indication of a leadership deficiency. Corruption destroys faithfulness, trustworthiness and gifted servanthood. It does not only scare investment and jobs, but is also a curse that can be felt for 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.”*

The Church in all places 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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