

## NMB Church Leaders for “Good Values, Ethics and Clean Living”

### Executive Summary

The Reverend Joel Edwards, the head of Micah Challenge, based in London, writes the following: “Corruption isn’t just bad ethics: it has a direct link to poverty and kills body, soul and spirit. It would cost the world approximately \$210billion per annum to keep our global promise to reduce extreme poverty by half in 2015 but every year the poor lose well over \$1 trillion through deliberate or indirect dishonesty.

In his letter to the ANC dated 23 August 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated “Apartheid was both morally and materially corrupt. Even as its laws enabled the theft of resources that rightly belonged to the people of SA, there were many in the administration, in state companies, in bantustans and in business who flouted even those corrupt laws to enrich themselves.

“As a movement representing the aspirations of the SA people, having fought a just struggle against a brutal regime, it was our intention and our hope that the overthrow of apartheid would herald a new era of integrity, honesty and ethical conduct by all in positions of responsibility.”

The ongoing instability in the poorer areas of our country and our city (the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro) may very well be about a perception that current leadership are not accountable to the people as they stand accused of greed, fraud, corruption and nepotism.

Incidents of corruption are so widespread or widely publicised that it would be an opportune time to get those who must clearly be in the majority to declare their own stance on this matter. Since the Christian faith is widely understood to represent the majority of people in this country, we should set the example when addressing our congregants and thus giving effect to the injunction contained in Matthew 7:3-5, and complementing the sentiment expressed by our President in his letter addressed to the ANC.

Some research conducted by the Massachusetts’s Institute of Technology (MIT) is the most persuasive argument for this type of approach.

The conclusion of the researchers in that study, entitled "The dishonesty of honest people", done in 2005 is hugely relevant: they state that people are prone to allow themselves a level of dishonesty without thinking themselves to be dishonest. People deceive themselves, in other words. And the most remarkable finding was that the reminder of one of the central tenets of the Christian Faith, the ten commandments, virtually eliminated that self-deception. At the moment the church has a window of opportunity for intervention to take place, since many of those responsible for supporting, organising and implementing service delivery, both in government and industry, worship regularly, as committed members, in local Christian congregations.

In the pages that follow, the compiler attempts to provide guidance on the various approaches that might be adopted to achieve a substantial reduction in the occurrence of fraud and corruption in our society.