

Who Is Your Role model?

The statement of “don’t do as I do, but do as I say” is not a new one.

We were taught it by our teachers at school.

But I also know of a better way expressed by a leader, and I quote: “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” (Apostle Paul)

This statement is directly related to more than one concept or idea. The first is the establishment of role models. Paul’s role model was Christ.

The second thought that comes to mind is the word influence.

The third notion that comes to mind is the thought DNA. (The central character that defines us).

In this beloved country of ours, with its best constitution in the world crafted after the victory by the people over an oppressive apartheid system, the poor in particular are experiencing a new kind of oppression.

We have role models who are sending a clear message: “Do as I do, not as I say.” Corruption is now an easy and – in some circles – an acceptable way to accumulate personal wealth.

When you remove the pension funds of those who are ultimately the fathers and mothers of the nation, those who have shed their blood in labour and pain to secure a hard-earned democracy – whose influence did you follow? Who is your role model? Who taught you this?

When you move the economy of a nation through relationships that capture a whole state, and you have commissions investigating your levels of integrity, and you know you should never be in a court of law – whose influence did you follow? Who is your role model? Who taught you this?

When you mismanage and strip the coffers of parastatals responsible for the welfare of a nation. When you bring our national airline to the point closure, our supply of much-needed electricity to the point of collapse. When you mismanage state funds of the working class purposed for the upliftment of the poor and you contribute to intensifying the three main evils of poverty, inequality and unemployment – whose influence did you follow? Who is your role model? Who taught you this?

When you manage the affairs of sick and dying people in our nation caused by an unseen enemy called Covid-19 and you find large numbers of tenders being fraudulently awarded and you find unfruitful expenditure depriving the sick and dying of much-needed equipment, and our doctors and nursing staff are dying in the forefront of the battle – whose influence did you follow? Who is your role model? Who taught you this?

When you find our women, sons and daughters being raped and killed. When crime has become a profession and innocent people’s lives are cut short by stray bullets – who is responsible for these failures of the justice system in a post-apartheid era? Whose influence did you follow? Who is your role model? Who taught you this?

Interestingly, we have become more famous for corruption than delivering the promised fruits of freedom.

It started with the arms deal which coincided with the rapid spread of HIV/Aids in Africa. Now we have commissions going through the motions of investigating numerous corruption scandals in the height of the Covid-19 virus.

Corruption is now systemic throughout every province. To our president, this is my small contribution:

1. Addressing the nation on corruption in the way you have is highly commendable. Sir, we must move from information to implementation. What we lack is accountability leading to the prosecution of those found guilty of corruption.
2. The image of the ruling party is being questioned as loyalty to the party seems to be more important than integrity or good governance. My small contribution is – restore our confidence in deploying leaders of integrity into all spheres of government.
3. Our human rights are violated due to the non-delivery of basic services. The pandemic is not the cause of this as the cancer of corruption stems from before the virus.

Churches, civil society, business and alliances of the three have to rise and address the wrongful misrepresentation of who we are as South Africans. There are no quick solutions, but we can turn the tide.

Let us change the narrative to “This is not who we are! We are best defined as people who voiced our rejection against injustices.”.

Our silence is deafening. The voices from the grave are much louder!

The Church will continue to pray for divine intervention as well as the implementation of divine strategies.

We will stand against all forms of injustices.

We have good role models in this country. Men and women who have succeeded against the odds.

We will overcome!

Apostle Neville Goldman: Ebenezer International