

There can be no peace in the face of gross corruption and ineptitude

Contrast the faithfulness of God with the collapse of public governance, municipal stewardship, and the victory of the corrupt in Nelson Mandela Bay.

The living God is continuously working to create a trustworthy, caring world where life can flourish, humans can employ their talents and fulfil their God-given destiny in life.

God is light and truth, dispelling evil and darkness. God employs the faithful to care for others, to serve, to seek public good, care for the poor and the destitute, support the widow and the orphan.

We, the faithful, are salt, yeast and light, changing society for the good.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God and complete human being, embodies God's heart on earth. Jesus always noticed the needy, seeking the destitute, visiting the sinner, caring for the helpless.

Jesus is the perfect example of the way God intends us to live and to govern.

Contrast this with what we experience from those who occupy the positions of political leaders and metropolitan office bearers.

The pages of The Herald are a daily indictment of the collapse in leadership and service delivery.

Think of the water leaks, lack of housing, reports on corruption swept under the carpet, disappearing money, the inability to convene a council meeting to elect a permanent mayor, the appointment of a permanent municipal manager, the speaker's appeal of a court verdict telling her to do her job, and rampant Covid-19 relief corruption, amongst other also very serious indictments.

A sickening list indeed. Much of the connivance around and in our council and administration serves darkness. Lies and evil have become entrenched in our local governance.

Given such a wonderful God and such a lacking administration, what are we to do? What is the responsible Christian action we should take? What should the church strive for?

Firstly, the church needs to guide divinely inspired discontent with the current unbearable situation.

Complacency, apathy and acceptance of the status quo is the enemy of truth, justice and God's Kingdom of light and truth. As long as we tolerate the actions of corrupt politicians and officials, for so long we collaborate to keep a dysfunctional system going.

Corrupt politicians are masters in pulling wool over our eyes and make us believe that many of the allegations are part of a dark complot against them. We are nudged into acceptance of broken traffic lights, potholes, a dehumanising toilet system in many areas, lack of water provision and poor auditing results.

In such a situation there is no peace. The church should not promote peace with corruption and ineptitude. It is a time to flame discontent over the discrepancy between our situation and God's intent for us.

Church leaders and congregations should initiate public conflict with the status quo.

We have many venues. Think of our pulpits, the billboards across the metropole, social media and word of mouth.

We need to ask the difficult questions, and ask them publicly. Many politicians and officials sit in our pews, and worship with us. It is possible for church leaders to interact with those, to ask for answers, to demand accountability.

Truth seeking destabilises a system of corruption and ineptitude, creating the possibility for a new and better dispensation.

Secondly, the church needs to endorse what is good, right and serving justice.

We publicly welcome the first arrests of the corrupt being made by the Hawks and the progress of a renewing National Prosecuting Authority. We applaud the judicial system for doing their work without fear or favour.

The church asks the relevant authorities, investigative units and prosecution bodies to focus on the Bay. We need to see prosecution locally and more of it.

Thirdly, salvation and forgiveness of sins are always available to those who repent of their sins and who seeks justice. Nobody is condemned by their sins and transgressions. God is graceful.

The truth sets us free. We therefore should encourage people to come forward, to confess and to assist authorities with their investigative work to bring perpetrators of corruption to book.

Fourthly the church needs to actively work on a unified witness against corruption and poor governance.

There are forces bent on driving wedges between Christians. We also share a horrible history of racism and perceived superiority and inferiority. This tragic history divides us. By joining hands our communal witness and action for truth and honesty becomes a blessing to the whole of society.

Lastly the church needs to pray. The trustworthy and faithful God opposes the corrupt and the abuse of power. God is active in history, as Mary prays prophetically: "God has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble" (Luke 1:51v).

Our mission is indeed against corruption and for good governance, to the glory of God and for all people to flourish.

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