

Divisions are slowly destroying our dry metro

Eddie Daniels

"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand". (Mark 3:24-25)

This is a timeless quote often used by preachers in sermons and government officials when trying to highlight the political and many other divisions that separate people.

By saying that a house divided cannot stand, Jesus is illustrating the fact that the strength of a movement or idea or a nation relies on people coming together in unity. This is something we see in daily life all the time.

Whether it is a business, a sports team, a political party, or a church, everyone has to work together if anything is to be accomplished.

Right now, we are living in a most divisive time that our beloved South Africa has faced since the turbulent days of apartheid.

We are so divided at a time when there is so much at stake. Our cherished democracy that so many made the ultimate sacrifice for is being corroded by division and even political assassination.

Sadly, the water crisis in our metro has once again brought 'division' to the fore about a matter that exposed the folly of supposed 'principle' over the good of the people.

Surely, we have been gifted a single opportunity to show that our metro's leaders can for once put party interests aside for the common good.

The public officials we elect seemingly suffer from an amnesia of convenience once they occupy office.

Serving the needs of the people is replaced and driven by personal ideology, greed, and lust for power when, in truth, they have been gifted a mandate to serve civil society.

A concomitant to the aforementioned is the overt discrimination and assaults against anyone considered to be "the other" – yes, I am referring to people labelled, "foreigners".

Jesus urged unity among believers because, once divisions and conflict beset a nation, or metro, productivity, progress, and prosperity inevitably grind to a halt, and the entire commitment to ensure "a better life for all" is weakened and becomes vulnerable to attack, and eventual destruction. It is simply wrong!

Our elected civil leaders must rediscover the true meaning of the word "politics" which is the art of living together in community. By implication it is also the art of working together for the good of all people and not serve narrow political aspirations that are party aligned in local governance structures.

Jesus said: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall."

As a free people, living in a nation that has gifted the world with the philosophy of ubuntu, we cannot let this be undermined by poor governance.

We cannot let our amazing metro be ruined by a spirit of not caring for and supporting one another especially the poor and indigent in our midst.

We cannot sit idly by and allow it to be mismanaged politically.

No, we are not a perfect metro or nation for we have not lived up to the ideals of our Constitution.

For over 27 years we have yearned for leadership that is servant-like and not self-serving for personal expediency.

Imagine if our elected public representatives understood the challenge Jesus placed before his disciples in John 15 that there is no greater love than laying down one's own life for another?

Responsibility begins with each of us. I am reminded of the quote by Pastor Martin Niemöller: "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionist, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

"Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me".

For our metro and nation to be successful, we have to learn to work together as one people, uniting and strengthening our nation again.

May we pray for our elected officials that they may be united in the purpose of serving for the good of the people.

Furthermore, that they will be proactive and not assume someone else will take care of things. That they will pull together and listen to seek to understand one another.

Let us commit to cherishing each individual and assume the role of being our brother and sister's keeper for if we stand together, we can surmount any difficulties that might lie ahead of us, and one day realise the Kingdom of God on this earth.

My deepest hope and my most tender prayer, is that as a metro we rediscover the art of listening; listening to each other in openness and mercy.

May we listen to our own hearts in love and forgiveness but mostly, may we listen to God in quietness and awe.

Such listening which is boundless in its beauty can give birth to wisdom whereby we find one another in a renewed commitment of cooperation for it will beckon us to peace, and the art of living together in community.

I am not asking for perfection but for a better world where each life matters.

I guess, in the end, I am simply asking for deep listening on the part of those who govern us locally and nationally.

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