

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba

Posted by [Anglican Media Office, Bishops court](#)

Transform our corruption-fighting agencies!

Posted: 31 Aug 2020 01:23 AM PDT

The Archbishop's contribution to an SACC Anti-Corruption Service held on Sunday August 30 to launch the SACC Churches' Anti-Corruption Campaign:

Having called for 2020 to be the Year of the Orange Jumpsuit, I am pleased and privileged to add my voice to this service of lament and protest and to support September as a month of church action against corruption.

I have wept. I have agonized. I have prayed for long hours in my heart. I have spoken my heart out in public over these past few days, over the terrible, downright despicable theft of public money, the looting of state coffers, and above all, the undisguised theft from the poor. Corruption, as I said in a message to South Africa's president a few days ago, is annihilating the very lives of the poorest of the poor. It is as if the corrupt big-wigs – those people who joined the party only to enrich themselves – have declared genocide against the poor. Like the scribes and Pharisees who Jesus called out in Matthew's Gospel, they are hypocrites; they are thieves, and they must return the stolen treasures of the poor.

As I have thought and prayed and agonized, my heart has often returned to that sobering story in 2 Samuel 12, where you will recall the prophet Nathan confronts, directly and unambiguously, the mighty David. I have three direct Biblically-based challenges that I ask you to open your hearts to.

When David reacted with shock and disgust to the theft of the lamb from the poor man, Nathan said: "It is you." No wriggle room, no excuses, no pussyfooting around the fact of theft. It is you! I say the same to those accused of theft and corruption and deceit and of impoverishing the already poor. It is you! As with David, so it is with you. There is no wriggle room. Let me say categorically: it is not enough to take special leave, to stand aside or to disappear onto the side-lines unscathed, your crimes covered up. No, it is you! It is you!

Secondly, Nathan says to David, "I have anointed you the king of Israel and taken you out from under the hand of Saul." We know what it took to bring this country out from under the hands of many Sauls – that proud and incredibly noble history, under the hand of God over the long years of struggle, in the harsh conditions of prisons and torture chambers across our country, in the lonely years of exile. We recognize and have saluted it over and over again. But let me repeat this very categorically. It is precisely that noble history, those sacrifices, the courage of the foot soldiers, that makes the betrayal and lies of so many of your leaders and those connected to the systems of

patronage so much more despicable, so much more reprehensible. We raise the question which Nathan raised, and we ask it as he did, “Why did you despise the Word of the Lord and do evil?”

Please hear my last word, spoken with all the desperation I can muster. Verse 13 says: “David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'” I beg you who stand accused, you who are still hiding, who are trying to wriggle out of your sin and complicity; with a pastor's heart I beg of you: repeat the words of David! Acknowledge your corruption and your collusion. Repent of your wrongdoing, return the monies you have stolen, step down from your positions no matter how high or low they are. It is you who we need to hear from.

If today I speak to you because you are currently in the dock, know that tomorrow I will talk to others. I will talk to those in business who rob the poor, I will speak to other political parties, for indeed, corruption is an insidious virus. I will talk to the churches, to my church, and the faith communities who have also often trampled on the poor and ignored the cries of those on the margins. But today is the day I choose to talk to you and, with you, to pray that God will bless our country, guide her rulers, guard her people, and establish her in justice and peace.

A call to transparency

To hold the corrupt to account, we need urgently to transform our corruption-fighting agencies, both by urgently cleaning out and strengthening existing agencies, and adding a Chapter 9 institution to fight corruption which is independent of the control of the Executive. Such a body needs a toll-free number to enable whistle-blowers to report corruption, and we need more robust protection for those whistle-blowers. We have seen too much interference with the investigative and prosecution arms of government over the past two decades to depend only on the Executive to ensure justice.

However, ending corruption in our land does not only involve bringing corrupt individuals to justice – but we must also end the dependence of political parties and their leaders on donations from the rich and the powerful. This fundraising practice roots the crisis in the structures of political parties, so we must also overhaul the system of financing parties. As a means of curbing corruption, I call on President Ramaphosa to bring into effect legislation that will regulate fundraising for political parties.

If our campaign to end corruption is to be credible, we should also be careful that in pointing out the motes in the eyes of politicians, we do not ignore the beams in our own eyes. This means that as well as campaigning against corruption, we must campaign on broader societal issues affecting the welfare of our people, such as secure access to food, climate justice, gender-based violence, and practical action to root out the patriarchy in our churches which often facilitates such violence.

Finally, let us draw inspiration from the successes we have achieved in keeping up with ministry and worship during the coronavirus lockdown and follow it up by working to change our economic and governance models to bring about equality and the flourishing of all.

The Most Revd Dr. Thabo Makgoba

Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town

August 30, 2020

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba

[ANC's 'corrupt bigwigs' must return 'stolen treasures' – Archbishop Thabo](#)

Posted: 26 Aug 2020 08:30 PM PDT

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba has called on President Cyril Ramaphosa to ensure that “hypocrites” and “thieves” in the ANC return what they have stolen from the public and be sent to jail.

He made the call in a message recorded to support a new anti-corruption campaign launched by the SA Council of Churches, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, the Foundation for Human Rights and the Council for the Advancement of the SA Constitution.

Representatives of the organisations met the ANC's “top six”, headed by President Ramaphosa, on Monday, where they said that “the governing party leadership appears compromised within itself.” They added: “There comes a time when the moral depravity of some in positions of authority, and in the private sector, undermine the very notion of nationhood and the underlying value of public service. We are compelled to assert: This is not how we shall be known as a nation. We refuse to allow corrupt networks in different provinces to go about their criminal activity, trampling on the rights of honest and law-abiding people.”

Addressing President Ramaphosa a video and audio message, Archbishop Makgoba said:

“Mr President:

“In the Book of Kings in the Old Testament, God tells Elijah to leave the cave to which he has retreated, and to engage with the world. Similarly today, God compels us as the Church to come out of our sanctuaries and to speak out about the conditions that afflict our people. If we don't, then as Jesus says in Luke's Gospel, the very stones will cry out.

“Today, Mr President, our hearts, our souls, our bodies and our minds are consumed with the national crisis that faces South Africa. The public's money, life-saving money that is meant to provide oxygen to the breathless poor in the midst of a pandemic, has been misappropriated, stolen in brazen defiance of the commandment in the Book of Exodus which enjoins each of us: Thou shalt not steal.

“Mr President, this is not only stealing. It is annihilating the very lives of the poorest, it is almost genocidal in effect. Corrupt big-wigs who have joined your party, not to serve the common good but to

enrich themselves, act with impunity – their attitudes are debilitating, life-drenching. 'Ha bana letswalo, Mr President, ba feteletse.' They are, like the scribes and Pharisees Jesus called out in Matthew's Gospel, hypocrites.

“At this time in the history of our country, we must draw a line in the sand and say anew: Thus says the Lord, on whom our hope is founded, the hypocrites and the thieves must return the stolen treasures of the poor, and they must be dispatched to jail, where they must wear orange jumpsuits.”

[AnglicanMediaSA · Archbishop Thabo Makgoba addresses President on ANC corruption](#)

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