

TWENTY-FIRST KWAZULU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PRAYER BREAKFAST

*Theme: "Stand fast in the faith, be strong.
Let all that you do be done in love."*

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Mr Master of Ceremonies and the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly's Chief Whip, Mr SJ Mhlungu; religious leaders; Mr Mayor; members of the Consular Corps; my brothers and sisters of the Christian faith and my brothers and sisters of other faiths. I greet you my brothers and sisters in the name of our Lord, and I greet my brothers of other faiths, who are here with us once again at this year's Prayer Breakfast.

I wish to thank each and every one of you for taking the trouble to rise up so early to be at this Prayer Breakfast in order to share this very special moment that we have had each year for the last 21 years.

I am saddened by the fact that our brother, Father Ross Main, with whom I started this Prayer Breakfast 21 years ago, is not with us. He had to return to the United States ahead of the time he should have left, owing to ill health. I hope that we will all remember him today in our prayers.

I thank our brother, Pastor Michael Abraham, for his message to us. I thank all the participants at this Prayer Breakfast, each one for his or her part. I extend a very special welcome to our brothers from the United States, Mr Cliff Gosney, Dr Robert Merrell and Dr Robert Dean.

For me, as will be the case with many of you who have attended these Prayer Breakfasts in the last two decades, today is a very special Prayer Breakfast as there is always something special about any 21st anniversary. For us this is a very special anniversary when we think of all the things that we have prayed together for over all these years. I think in particular of the intercessions we have made in the two decades for our country.

When we started holding these Prayer Breakfasts we were in the middle of the dark days of apartheid. I am reminded of a song we used to sing as children at Sunday School which was "Count your blessings, name them one by one." We have every reason as we look back to count many blessings which God has showered on us over all these years, not because we deserved them, but because God is Love. We as Believers believe that He loved us first.

Nowhere do I think our Lord spells out this love better than in the Gospel according to St John, Chapter 13 verses 34 and 35, when we hear Him say:

34. *A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you so you must love one another.*

35. *All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.*

Also in St John Chapter 15, verses 12 to 14:

12. *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

13. *Greater love has no one than this, that one lays down his life for his friends.*

14. *You are my friends if you do what I command.*

We have a very challenging theme for this year's Prayer Breakfast: "Stand fast in the faith, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love."

This Prayer Breakfast is attended by leaders in various fields. It is attended by church leaders, political leaders, business leaders, leaders in education, leaders in the media, in health, in agriculture and virtually leaders in all walks of life. We gather in this way as servants of our nation in whatever field we are called upon to serve God's people. Each one of us here is very privileged in being given the opportunity to serve. We are all equally important in the various fields in which God has called us to serve. So this year's theme is a challenge to each and everyone of us to "Stand fast in the Faith."

Whatever we do, we are called upon to witness as Believers. This is extremely difficult in a society as heterogeneous as ours, where for decades chasms between us were institutionalised through the wicked ideology of apartheid. Racism itself predates 1948 when apartheid was imposed on us as the policy on the basis of which our country and our society were ordered.

I feel very ashamed at times as I look back, because in my anger at the brutalization of my people through this ideology, I tended to forget that the fact that my fellow South Africans sinned so much against me and my people, did not mean that I and my people were without sin. We tended to think that because we were so much wronged, that we were as white as the driven snow. Throughout the years of our fight against racism, we were blinded by our righteous anger to our own failings. Apartheid provided us with just the right scapegoat, and we failed to be introspective.

There is something very wrong in our society because we failed to love. Our theme says "Let all that you do be done in love." That was our challenge in the past, and this is the challenge that we are faced with as fellow South Africans, even more than at any other time in the history of our troubled land.

We always have this Prayer Breakfast during Lent which is a great time for introspection. For those of us who are Christians, this is the greatest of all Christian anniversaries because it is the time when God's love was demonstrated to us beyond all doubt, when His Son died for our sins. Our Lord suffered because He loved us. Can we look at ourselves, each one

in his or her field of service, and look at whether in whatever field of service we are serving, we are in fact prompted by love in doing what we do? Do we really do whatever we do because of love? Is whatever we do, whatever our calling is, done in love, as our theme for today suggests?

There are words we all sometimes use when we refer to our immediate family as "our loved ones." This is of course true, but this often makes us forget that as Believers we are supposed to regard every one of our fellow beings as "our loved ones." That is the challenge of our Faith. If we stand fast in the Faith, that is what we are supposed to do. If we want to be strong in Faith, then all we are expected to do is to love our fellow beings.

In the Beatitudes our Lord spells out to us all the things that we can be if we truly love. What is more, He expands the word love to include those who do not in turn love us. We get a clear injunction in the Gospel according to St Matthew, Chapter 5 verses 43 to 48:

- 43. *You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.*
- 44. *But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*
- 45. *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous.*
- 46. *If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax-collectors doing that?*
- 47. *And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?*
- 48. *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

That is a tall order - our Lord's definition of love, which includes loving even one's enemies. If you are in politics as some of us are, to do so can be seen as a sign of weakness by your supporters. I have experienced this kind of rebuke from my followers over many decades, whenever I have treated well those who have done me harm in the past, or even if it be at the very present time. My followers have often called it my blind spot. They have often ridiculed me, when I have defended what they see as an undeserved kindly act to someone who is harming me, or has harmed me in the past, by saying in my defence that I do not know of any human garbage bins for bad people! They say that if they can show me human garbage bins for those who have harmed others, I would also consider throwing these enemies into such human garbage bins, if they do indeed exist.

And yet difficult as it is to discard this weakness in treating my enemies in a manner which offends my supporters, I derive great comfort in the Beatitudes. In St Matthew Chapter 5, verses 11 and 12 we read:

- 11. *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*
- 12. *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

This is extremely difficult if you are in politics where trading insults is a way of life. To control your tongue when the natural thing is to swear back, is not a very easy thing to do. I think it will help you as much as it helps me at times, to remind yourself that if you see someone as a sinner, you must remember that you are also a sinner. You may recall in St Mark's Gospel Chapter 10, verse 18 that our Lord responded when he was called a good teacher by saying:

Why do you call me good? Jesus answered 'No one is good except God alone.'

Things often go wrong, whether it is in family relationships or relationships in the wider society, because very often we are tempted to feel hyper-self-righteous. We harm each other in different degrees unless we remember that blame does not only come from one side. Whenever we feel like apportioning blame, we should feel the humility which all those who gathered to stone the adulterous woman felt when Jesus spoke to them: (John 8 : 7):

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.'

So none of us is perfect and none of us is without sin. It would help us as leaders of people in whatever sphere we lead, to remind ourselves that we are also not without sin, for none of us is perfect. Once we know this, it will help us whenever we pass judgement on others, who like us are also not perfect.

In pondering further about the theme of this year's Prayer Breakfast, I was struck very forcibly by the thought that each of the next moments we live have in them all the history of our whole life experience. Each moment there lies ahead what is going to be because we bring with us everything we are as we enter it. Then that thought was followed by the realisation that the present constitutional crises has in it the totality of South African politics, and that that politics is what it is because the last three centuries have been what they were.

Those two thoughts did not stand alone - they were subservient to the overriding thought that this crisis is God's moment in history as he drives us all to His divinely appointed end. This crisis is God's opportunity to put right that which greed, racism, fear, racial prejudice and all the sins that go with them, made wrong for so many millions for so long. Never could there have been such a cry from any nation as there is now from South Africans to end injustice, and bigotry, and racist fear and aggression as now arises out of the very depths of the South African people.

And as these thoughts went through my mind an awesome sense of responsibility settled on me. How dare I set myself up to lead when so much was at stake for so many millions. How dare I set myself up as one who could hear the people in this hour of their distress.

I know that as I work late into the night, and on many occasions into the early hours of the morning, for my people and for South Africa, the darkness brings with it the cover of murder and the burning of homes, the death of a child, the devastation of what has been scraped together in a whole lifetime, and a testing of their belief in who they are and what they are doing.

When your people whom you lead die because you lead them, and because they believe in you, and follow you, and serve the cause you serve, you must be very sure that what you do is as right and as purposeful and as founded in realism, and as true to fundamental democratic principles, as you can possibly make it.

And then as you are gripped by the thought that the constitutional crisis we are in is going to result in a great deal more death and suffering than we have known before, and that everything that has come out of the whole struggle for liberation is being poured into the crisis, you are thrust out into the very extremities of knowing what it is like to be alone with your choices, your analysis and the decisions you make.

And then I cry out to God, why me? Why must it be me that has to take the hard and rocky road to democracy, and security and prosperity? In my soul I wrestle with my conscience as I ask myself whether there is another easier road to the new democratic South Africa which my people want with such a deep wanting. In the end I am always forced back to a re-examination of the decisions I make, and a retesting of them against the principles on which I rely in making decisions.

I did not take up the chieftainship of the Buthelezi people to further my own interests. I was an ambitious young man in my early twenties. I wanted to take up law and to progress in my personal life. I had to forsake the dreams of my youth to do what in the end I knew I just had to do. I consulted a lot of friends, family and leaders, such as Inkosi Albert Lutuli, and not one of them encouraged me to do as I pleased. All of them stressed that it was in the interests of my people's struggle for me to serve them in that capacity. Once that decision was made I found myself immediately faced with the choice of whether to use the position of being an Inkosi to steer my people away from strife and to take them into paths of least resistance in order to gain as much for them in the hideous South African circumstances as possible, or to lead them into the heart of the struggle for liberation.

It was the latter which was my ideal. I was backed in my final choice by the encouragement of Chief Albert Lutuli and then the ANC of the day, and I stood up to be counted in the struggle for liberation. Even before my position was confirmed, I was opposed by the South African Government which did everything possible to bar me from succession to the position my father's death left open. That opposition only deepened my resolve to do what was right. I was hounded as a young man in my early twenties by the Security Police and efforts on a large scale were made to undermine my position and everything I did then, in the service of my people.

It was on principle that I fought apartheid and led the Zulu people in their resistance to the Bantu Authorities system when it was introduced. It was principle which finally made me accept the demands of the Zulu people to lead them in the struggle against the Bantu Authorities system when it was finally forced on us. I will ever be proud of the fact that the Zulu people were the only people in South Africa who had, in the end, to be forced to comply with the system. Finally we were bluntly told that the Bantu Authorities Act was not as permissive as we were at first made to understand, and that we had to comply with it as officials who gave us the impression that there was any choice in the matter had been "wrongly" instructed.

It was on principle that I used my position first as Chief Executive Officer of the KwaZulu Territorial Authority, and later the position of Chief Executive Councillor and later that of Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, to damn and condemn apartheid and to thwart the Government's homeland policy.

My stand against apartheid was principled and I never sought popularity or fame in what I was doing. I in fact paid very dearly for a great many things I did. And I always risked paying a far greater price than I was paying for the sake of principle. I was condemned for what I was doing to thwart apartheid from within the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. I have lost more friends than any other man I know of because I did not follow the politics of expediency. I did not do what was in political vogue. I did what, for me, was right.

I personally gained nothing by opposing the armed struggle. I gained nothing by opposing the punitive international isolation of South Africa. I gained nothing by my rejection of communism and my commitment to democracy and free enterprise. I had nothing to gain by standing up in the mid-seventies to publicly quote the words of Mr Nelson Mandela and other banned leaders. I remember that certain newspapers actually chided me for doing so without action being taken against me. They missed the fact that these were acts of civil disobedience. I had nothing to gain by sending emissaries out into the world to seek contact with the banned ANC and PAC. I risked everything in offering the ANC a working partnership in which they could do the best that could be done from their exiled base, and I could do what I could best do from a democratic base inside the country.

I gained nothing personally from remaining true to principle and refusing to put the internal Inkatha democratic base under exiled ANC command. I gained nothing from refusing to abandon the internal non-violent democratic struggle for the armed struggle and the politics of confrontation and consequent violence. I gained nothing from defying world pressures to resign from the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and to follow in the footsteps of Steve Biko and other Black Consciousness leaders into street protest politics and confrontation politics which backed the armed struggle. I gained nothing from vehemently opposing what the United Democratic Front and COSATU were doing in opposition to my political stands.

My friends, these were not big decisions that I had to make from time to time with no rest periods between them. They were daily decisions, hourly sometimes, as I had to respond to circumstances which challenged them and which led my people into ever deepening suffering. The principled stands we took had to be re-enforced by daily re-commitments to them as they were opposed in conference halls, on factory floors and on street corners.

They were decisions that led to the death of people who adopted them and followed them and lived out their consequences. The only gratification I had arose out of the fact that I was making principled stands and the people who followed me grew in number as Inkatha's membership doubled, and redoubled the next year and again redoubled the following year. There was a magnificent Black South African response for a principled response in the broad field of non-violent democratic opposition to apartheid.

It is a product of nearly two decades of experience of both the costs of apartheid and the costs of taking principled stands against it that is being poured into the constitutional crisis we face today. I am not opposing the 1993 constitution because I and the IFP have personal or party political gains to make. The opposition to this constitution is principled and the costs to us of making principled stands are even heavier now than they were in the 1980's

or in the 1990's thus far. I have in many ways been a stormy petrel throughout my political career, but at no time have I raised the wrath of so many both inside South Africa and outside, for my principled stand on the Interim Constitution of 1993.

I am prepared to go into the wilderness for principles sake, and I know that there are hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of IFP grassroots members and supporters who are prepared to die for the sake of the principled stands we are taking. If anybody thinks that the IFP is led by the nose by Buthelezi, they will be blind to the reality of the real grassroots Inkatha to invoke resistance politics which has never been seen in the history of this country before.

During the latter part of last year there was a great deal of internal debate about whether or not the IFP's opposition to what was then the draft constitution should be moderated, and there was a great deal of media speculation about who in the IFP was right in their interpretation of the will of the people.

At the end of January this year I called for a Special General Conference of the IFP. Something like 10 000 people from across the country arrived at Conference to bring grassroots sentiments to bear on the crucial question of whether or not the IFP should enter the elections under the 1993 constitution. In a mammoth fourteen hour debate delegates spoke and the voice of the people was heard. There was a resounding people's NO to participation in any election under the 1993 constitution. Nobody who attended that Conference could possibly have interpreted the debate as one in which Buthelezi was leading the IFP along by its nose.

The reverse was actually the case. I received marching orders from the Conference. My instructions are very clear. I must not agree to enter into any election under this constitution unless the compromises we offer are accepted, and there is acceptance of the formulation of the compromises by the acceptance of the amendments to the constitution as contained in the Freedom Alliance's 19th December proposals.

My brothers and sisters, I started by saying that it is as though each new moment we face in life is filled with the whole of our history and everything we have done before we actually reach that moment. The crisis we face has in it the very essence of the history of the struggle for liberation. In the crisis there is the unresolved conflict between the bosses of apartheid and those leaders opposed to apartheid, and in it there is the conflict between the IFP and the ANC.

The 1993 constitution, even as amended, far from uniting South Africa, dramatically underlines the conflict between the IFP and the ANC. The ANC has chosen to accept the 1993 constitution definition of that conflict, and I challenge the constitution which does so. I challenge the election that might yet be held under it. I say NO to a constitution which is going to spawn more violence than any constitution this country has ever had, has spawned.

More people are dying more violently every week now in disputes about this constitution and the politics of the parties in favour of it and against it, than have ever died over political conflicts before. The politics of violent confrontation and death have begun escalating and for as long as this constitution is held up as the only constitution under which there will be an election, violence will continue in its upward spiralling.

is inherently there in any negotiation process. If the process itself becomes a stumbling block to the achievement of democracy, then the only democratic remedy is to leave the process and to challenge it from without.

After we left the World Trade Centre we spent six hard months negotiating to have some of our views included in the decision making process which was formulating the constitution. We boiled down our strong and many faceted opposition to the constitution to propose a compromise set of amendments in which we got some of the elements of the constitution we wanted, and conceded some of the elements other parties in the negotiation process wanted.

Our 19th of December 1993 document basically proposes a compromise in which at the national level a two-phase constitutional development process is dominantly left intact, in exchange for federal-type provincial governments and structures being secured against central government intervention through a single phase constitutional development process. This was rejected, dominantly by the ANC, because they insisted on the right to dictate to provinces in the development of their own constitutions.

My friends, the world over it is recognised that centralist authoritarian governments do not succeed in uniting plural societies in which there are strong categorisations of race, colour and language groups. The history of the last five years should have taught the world that what the ANC is attempting to achieve is not achievable.

In order to be in the best position to judge what was so wrong with the status quo, we must ask what was wrong with past governments of South Africa. What was wrong was that past rule in South Africa was based on the dictum of "Might is right". Because the oligarchy that ruled us all these decades was armed to the teeth, it had a moral right to make laws for us.

It imposed its will on the disenfranchised majority who were conquered through superior arms, and who were kept in the position of voicelessness because they were unarmed. This was what was wrong with the status quo. What is emerging at this time when South Africa is poised to enter a new era?

We have had manipulated negotiations which have produced a Constitution which a significant section of the population reject. What do we see in our media? Polls are being bandied about and editorial comment in the country runs like this: According to the polls the ANC is supported by the majority in this country. Those parties which do not accept the foisting of a flawed Constitution on the people of South Africa are a minority, according to the polls. Therefore what is majority will should prevail over what the minority says however valid, because they are a minority.

According to this an oligarchy of a majority has a right to foist its will on the rest of the population. This is said in a society like ours which is so heterogeneous. It is forgotten that the South Africa that was put together in 1910 was not a voluntary Union for the majority of us. For example, the Zulu Nation, as a sovereign nation, was brought into the Union through the barrel of the gun. They did not exercise their self-determination when they were made part of the Union of South Africa. People of all races in this region, have a right to exercise their self-determination through a federal formula. It is therefore wrong to argue as if the Union of South Africa was God-ordained and as if people have no right to exercise their self-determination by being part of the one state and joined together with the rest of the land in a new voluntary Union through a federal formula.

And as I said in my opening paragraphs I am deeply aware that people are dying because I lead as I am instructed to lead by my people. Other leaders who are opposed to what I stand for can also say the same.

This is the 21st KwaZulu Legislative Assembly Prayer Breakfast. No Prayer Breakfast before it has ever been as pregnant with the need to know whether what we are doing in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly is right, and whether the costs of what we are doing could in any way be reduced. I stand before you beloved I hope, but also to be judged in honesty of our fellowship in these Prayer Breakfasts.

My opposition to the 1993 constitution I repeat is principled. No democratic country in Europe or North America would ever put the right to entirely re-write the constitution in the hands of any one political party. They would never ever agree that the only alternative constitution which Parliament would have to pronounce upon could only come from one political party. They would never ever agree to a constitution that would have deadlock breaking mechanisms in it which would enable the ruling party, which introduced the constitution, to call for an election if its attempts to have its constitution adopted, were defeated. Yet that is what the 1993 constitution provides for.

My brothers and sisters, for me constitutions should be all about the limitation of the power of the state and the maximization of the liberties of the people. Mad dogs do not muzzle themselves and power-hungry parties never voluntarily adopt democratic constitution under which elections can be held, and under which other political parties have an equal opportunity of winning and forming governments, particularly in Africa. Just cast your eyes north of us and you will see many examples of what I am saying.

For me the warnings are very, very clear. The 1993 constitution has its roots in a compromise position which very much favours the ANC's Harare Declaration idiom and demands. The constitution mirrors the intentions of the Record of Understanding that President de Klerk and Mr Mandela signed, and it concentrates constitutional, parliamentary and political advantages in the hands of whoever will win the first election. The 1993 constitution is an instrument of power for the party that wins the election, and the next constitution will be just another constitutional instrument for ANC party political power.

This is not the place for me to go into the details of constitutional argument about the constitutional clauses and language in the 1993 constitution. I am telling you only why we are opposing that constitution. We oppose it because it will concentrate power in the hands of a ruling political party and because it does not provide for the dynamic interaction of this country's population and cultural groups in an open and working democracy. It does not recognise the dominance of pluralism in this country, nor does it conform to any of the standards of successful working constitutions in plural societies. Its essential theme is centralism hidden behind cloaks of regionalism or provincialism which just can not bear proper analytical scrutiny.

During CODESA, and then during the first half of last year, we spent agonizing days, weeks and months labouring to make our point of view heard. We threw everything we had into the negotiation process. In the end it became very clear to us that the Multi-Party Negotiation Process was so dominated and so manipulated by ANC/SAG bilateralism that only what they wanted would ever emerge from it. We walked out of the World Trade Centre negotiations to address the process deficiencies from without. That democratic right

This is the crux of the problem that is not so well explained through the media. In a society where advocacy journalism is the order of the day, it becomes impossible for the ordinary citizen to know what is at stake. On the one hand, President de Klerk tells the whole world that the Interim Constitution that has emerged from the World Trade Centre is a federal Constitution. This is absolutely untrue. On the other hand, the President of the ANC, Mr Mandela, told me on the 23rd of June last year that he was totally against a federation. He bluntly told me that at most he would tolerate what he described to me as 'a strong provincial system'. What has emerged at the World Trade Centre is not even a strong provincial government. In Mr Joe Slovo's speech to the South African Communist Party, quoted in 'The African Communist' the following is what he says about their victory at negotiations:

"The very question from the start was: Who writes the Constitution? Our opponents wanted a "one-stage process", that is for the Constitution to be drawn up in the multi-party negotiations themselves. Our approach was for "a two-stage process" in which an elected Constituent Assembly would draw up the future Constitution. This we have won. Apart from the Constitutional principles (which we support) everything in the Interim Constitution can be re-written by the democratically elected representatives of the people.

We have always stood for a united South Africa, our opponents hoped to weaken a future democratic state by imposing federalism. We have won a united South Africa which does not exclude important decentralising measures. In all critical areas however, the future democratic state will have over-riding powers. If you look at the finance provisions of the whole dispensation, you will see that the purse-strings are firmly in the hands of the Central government. In regard to the armed forces, at least on paper we have won the battle against federalisation."

When we look at these standpoints, you then ask yourself who is telling the truth. I believe that both Mr Mandela and Mr Slovo are telling the truth. It is in these circumstances that I proposed International mediation.

In the end the man in the street only hears claim and counter-claim about the validity of the arguments of those who uphold the 1993 constitution and those who oppose it. There is a great deal of confusion in the minds of the people, and in the end unless there is effective intervention, the acceptance or rejection of good and bad constitutional principles will be completely overshadowed in an election in which the campaign is essentially about which political party will be dominant in the writing of the next constitution.

Towards the end of last year, and certainly by the end of January this year, it became clear to me that the South African Government and the ANC were not negotiating in good faith. This was because they had what they wanted and were only adopting placatory stances in negotiations with the IFP and the Freedom Alliance.

My brothers and sisters, it was in these circumstances that I first argued the merits of submitting failed negotiations, and the unresolved issues between conflicting parties about it, to a mediation process. The call for international mediation was at first rejected by both the South African Government and the ANC, which was only to be expected from those who had taken the position that they were satisfied with the constitution which went through Parliament. They did not want to be put in the position of having eminent internationalists and lawyers saying that they were wrong.

It is because my stand has been a principled stand, and because I truly want to achieve the objectives we have set ourselves, that I can lay everything before mediators and ask them whether, in their opinion, the objectives themselves are honourable and democratic. It is because I can confidently ask them whether they share my view that they can not be achieved through the 1993 constitution, that I have no hesitation in agreeing to international mediation. Our proposed amendments to the constitution are limited to what we regard to be essential to salvage the 1993 constitution from the partisan hands which shaped it.

I have a clear conscience in knowing that the constitutional amendments, which we regard as bottom line amendments and which must be met to enable us to go into elections, are not amendments for any IFP party political gain. They are amendments which I believe are necessary to introduce sufficient democratic safeguards into the constitution which will provide South Africa with a reconciling constitution. We desperately need reconciliation in South Africa. There can be no reconciliation if the current Interim Constitution is foisted on the country unamended. If I am wrong in my constitutional analysis, or if I am wrong that the 1993 constitution does not provide a framework for the emergence of an open democracy, then I will feel greatly honoured to change my views to help me help South Africa to achieve a real democracy.

This Prayer Breakfast today takes place in circumstances that may well dictate that it is the last KwaZulu Legislative Assembly Prayer Breakfast that we will ever have. We do not know today what March next year will be like. We do not know what kind of governmental structures there will be in KwaZulu-Natal. We do not know who will be at the helm of the government of this province. We therefore do not know what the future of these inspiring Prayer Breakfasts is going to be. I can only hope that the tradition will continue, regardless of who will be at the helm in this region.

These unknowns give this 21st Prayer Breakfast of ours a poignancy which truly characterises it. I am very aware that the attitudes I adopt, and the positions I espouse, could well change the political face of South Africa. I am also very aware that at no other time of my leadership has it ever been so necessary for me to act with wisdom and with statesmanship, as there is need for me to do so today. I come to this Prayer Breakfast humbled that on my shoulders there rests that kind of charge by history.

I have not come here to make categoric statements and to attempt to persuade those assembled in fellowship here, that I am right. Prayer Breakfast platforms are not for me political platforms. They are platforms from which I share some of my innermost thoughts with my brothers and sisters in Christ, and with my brothers and sisters of other faiths, who are like me in leadership positions within their own spheres in this region.

None of you will ever know just how much these Prayer Breakfasts have sustained me over the years, and how, when they take place just before the opening of the new KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, they inspire me, and strengthen my resolve to remain committed to act on principle and not expediency.

If you watched editorial comment in our newspapers and cartoons and what others say about me over my stand day in and day out, you must be surprised that I am not daunted by the volume of negative interpretations of my stand. To many of you it may appear as some kind of obduracy on my part. I wish to assure you that it is not obduracy, it is not stubbornness on my part, it is not even pride, as some people accuse me of. It is a question of me

sticking to principle. It is of course not even the first experience I have had in my political career of being the butt of so much scurrilous criticism and so many perjoratives. I am of course strengthened in my beliefs by what our Lord states in Luke 6 : verse 26:

Woe to you when all men speak well of you for that is how their fathers treated false prophets.

In a strange sense it is the very fellowship with my Christian brothers and sisters which strengthens my ability to be moral and to base everything I do on principle, that produces a situation in which some among them are moved to seek to oppose me for what I do and to criticise me for doing it. I have to translate moral commitment into principled action and I have to give that action political clout in constituency politics.

Some of the most difficult conversations I have during the course of the year are conversations with committed Christians, who think that certain church organisation's opposition to me is valid. They do not understand that the very fellowship of true questioning fellowship really does make me carefully reconsider my position. They do not understand that having done so, I, on occasions, come up with a deeper resolve not only to uphold that principle on which I have acted, but also to expand on applying that principle even more widely.

I mention this aspect of our Prayer Breakfast fellowship because I would like to draw you in to the deeper fellowship at this Breakfast than the public mind can comprehend. In that deeper fellowship I not only want constructive criticism, but I also want to gather the forces of Christian morality behind what I am doing. I am a servant of those who have put me in the leadership positions that I hold. I listen to their voice and I do believe that there is some truth in the saying *vox populi vox dei*. This is the voice of the poorest of the poor that I listen to. These are the people who like Christ are despised and who like Him are often the despised.

I move to conclude my message to you by remembering that once before I talked about the need for confession amongst the country's political leaders, and my willingness to confess any of my shortcomings and my weaknesses. When I spoke thus at that Prayer Breakfast I was totally unaware of the extent to which that which I said would be misrepresented and distorted. I was assailed in a manner that left me quite astonished for being lambasted for sharing with my brothers and sisters who were at that Prayer Breakfast. I opened my heart, in other words. Standing before you today I confess that I could not have been right in everything I did, and that I was not as successful in doing what was right as I ought to have been on some occasions. I am emphasising that like each one of you, I am just a sinner too. I really do seek the kind of fellowship at these Prayer Breakfasts in which we, as people gathered together from different faiths, and from different political camps and professions, can offer what is in our hearts to our Lord in prayer, and rely on the truth that where even two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be present.

Christ is present here today, and the Christ that is present here today is the same Christ who has been among the suffering people on every side of every division and in every political camp. It is that sure knowledge that still keeps my hope alive that our country will in the end be salvaged from the present constitutional crisis because that is what God wants to achieve through Christ in our midst.

I started by pointing out that we are all sinners and that we do wrong each other in different ways all the time. My prayer is that we may all have the courage to say as our Lord taught us: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We are a country crying for real reconciliation and our reconciliation begins with just those words. Let us weigh their meaning as we say them each day.

Let us remember that there is nothing impossible with God, but we must always remember that we must seek the best for our country. We must seek the best for our children and their children's children. None of us can do more than our best. Not just anything is good enough. Only the best is good enough for our country. It is this which as we gather here together in this Fellowship, we hope to have the strength to achieve. That strength can only come from our Maker and Creator.

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* Readings from the Thompson Chain Reference Bible (International Version)

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sticking to principle. It is of course not even the first experience I have had in my political career of being the butt of so much scurrilous criticism and so many perjoratives. I am of course strengthened in my beliefs by what our Lord states in Luke 6 : verse 26:

Woe to you when all men speak well of you for that is how their fathers treated false prophets.

In a strange sense it is the very fellowship with my Christian brothers and sisters which strengthens my ability to be moral and to base everything I do on principle, that produces a situation in which some among them are moved to seek to oppose me for what I do and to criticise me for doing it. I have to translate moral commitment into principled action and I have to give that action political clout in constituency politics.

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