

The disciples pursue Jesus when he wakes early and goes alone to pray. They tell him, "Everyone is looking for you". They seem delighted to be associates of 'a celebrity'. Jesus is not interested. He has work to do and moves on.

Paul is not interested in payment for his preaching. It delights him to give it for free. He will make himself all things for all people as an act of service to save some at any price.

Job frets on his bed as all seems pointless to him in his distress. Job though is far from being 'a patient sufferer'. He rages at God for the injustice God has allowed in standing by while the innocent (Job himself) suffer painfully over a long, seemingly endless, period.

Celebrity status; remuneration; suffering. All these observations are relevant to the situation in South Africa today. There is still widespread suffering, poverty lawlessness, and in many places, most especially Cape Town and the Western Cape, a three year long drought which will mean the taps will run dry by the beginning of April. The distance between rich and poor will be more marked; and there is the threat of riots, civil unrest, and disease.

Cape Town is run by the opposition, the DA. They have generally done a good job but the necessary infrastructure has not been put in place as the national government, run by an increasingly unpopular ANC, keep them short of funds to try to ensure failure.

During my stay, I read two books* on current affairs, ANC style. It is frightening to see in the surest, starkest terms what has been happening under the 'leadership' of Jacob Zuma, the State President. He came into office facing hundreds of charges of corruption. His main objective in both his terms of office, has been to keep himself out of prison and to accumulate as much wealth for himself and his huge family – he has six wives and at least twenty children, as humanly possible from the State and anyone who will sponsor him or his children. Their reward is to influence the running of government departments, even to the point it seems, of choosing ministers of state.

Both books document in detail the way the state has been 'captured' by families, such as the Gupta brothers, and other nefarious coalitions and billions of Rands of public funds, taxpayers money has been diverted to their Middle East or off-shore bank accounts. Monies which should have been used to build schools and hospitals, alleviate poverty, bring sanitation to squatter camps, and do the thousands of necessary things government should do for its people.

Millions of rand of public money have been spent on Zuma's modern Zulu corral for his family and entourage. It has been a scandal for years. Finally he has been compelled to pay a significant sum back to the State. A courageous Public Prosecutor, published two damning reports and action was finally taken by the courts. When her term of office came to an end she did not have her contract renewed. She was replaced by a puppet in a legal gown and wig.

That has been the consistent pattern. Anyone who shows professionalism and independence is got rid of and replaced by a stooge. South Africa had a taxation Bureau the envy of many third world countries. Consistently, year on year it exceeded its targets in recovering tax and it pursued tax evaders relentlessly and successfully. As such it was a threat to Zuma, who has not filed a tax return during his Presidency, and his tax-evading cronies. So the successful senior people were hounded out and SARS – South Africa Revenue Service, is now led by buffoons who know their masters' wishes.

The same is true of the Police, Eskom – the electricity provider, and many others. The courts remain independent, despite mighty efforts to change them; and some Press and media have been severely critical of all this. Others have been complicit, or duped to aiding Zuma's bidding.

Zuma was desperate to ensure that his successor would be his ex-wife, Nkosana Dlamini-Zuma, in the confident expectation that he would be pardoned of all his many crimes. Happily he failed. The election of Cyril Ramaphosa is already having positive outcomes, though most expect a deal to be done which will keep Zuma out of gaol.

He was brought up in poverty and learned to read and write while in prison on Robben Island. He was the main fixer in the spy network of the military wing of the ANC in exile and learnt to be devious, cunning and brutal. Though even his political enemies admit he has a charming and warm personality. But his mismanagement of the State for his own benefit will not be easily forgiven by those who remain in the swamp of poverty and severe deprivation.

Mannenburg is the destination of much of our Cape Flats fund money. The Church runs an after school centre which feeds over two hundred youngsters and occupies them. A youngster who has been involved with the project all her short life, since the scheme opened, was brutally murdered by her uncle just before Christmas. A Muslim teenager, who had also been present since day 1, was shot by a gangster, simply because he was standing in the wrong place. He had popped out to get some chips. It South Africa neither are news worthy. They are the daily events which arise from poverty, unemployment and hopelessness which creates gangs and violence and

the availability of drugs.

All the things which should be high on the agenda of the first citizen of the Republic.

In what contrast, Job, and Paul, and Jesus.

*The two books are: Adriaan Basson, *Enemy of the People*, Jonathan Bail Pub. 2017;
and Jacques Pauw, *The President's Keepers*, Tafelberg Pub, 2017