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# **NOW HEAR THIS!** WITH **KENNETH MESHOE**

## **If we must sing, let us sing of peace not war!**

**O**VER THE PAST decade, our country has received leaders of organisations from countries that were “bedeviled” by conflicts, hatred and wars. The common question they asked is how South Africans managed to change from a brutal and oppressive apartheid system to a democratic order without war that many in the world expected. Indeed we are admired by many who believe our nation can teach the rest of the world many lessons about forgiveness, reconciliation and nation-building. This achievement has to be protected at all costs.

That is why organizations, political parties and individuals who have labeled the struggle song “dubal, ibhunu” (shoot the boer) offensive, should not be called names and be accused of attempting to erase history. I believe this song is indeed offensive and does not promote forgiveness, reconciliation and nation-building that have made South Africa an excellent example and hope for those nations that are still ravaged by conflicts and wars.

Those who say the song “dubula’ ibhunu should be interpreted in it’s proper context should be reminded that a call to kill a group of people or individuals during a time of violent protests, is reckless and irresponsible.

Would it be correct to plant bombs in restaurants and other public places today just because it was done during the struggle? Would it be correct to necklace those that are suspected to be our enemies just because that is part of our history? If indeed the word “ibhunu” does not refer to whites, but to an apartheid system as the ANC secretary general argues, then how can you kill something that’s already dead?

Is apartheid not officially dead? Is it still in our statute books or not? I’m just asking.

Is the calling to shoot “amabhunu” not inciting conflict? Are those like us who believe it is wrong to call for the

killing of others “nursing ‘white’ fears at the expense of black aspirations”? I’m just asking.

Has the time not come for us all to celebrate our freedom and democracy with songs of joy, peace and love? Don’t we need new songs that acknowledge our painful past as part of our history while focusing on building a better South Africa? Songs that inspire confidence and encourage listeners to do good to all, songs that are based on values such as respect?

There are four levels of respect that we desperately need as South Africans.

Firstly, it is respect for God. We will obey Him, if we respect Him.

Secondly, respect for self. (If you do not respect yourself as a person, then you should not expect others to respect you.) Remember that respect should be earned and not demanded. Our lifestyles must command respect.

Thirdly, respect to one’s neighbour. If we have respect for others, we won’t harm or hurt them, even with songs we sing.

Lastly, respect for property. Those who have no respect for property find it easy to destroy it.

**I** SINCERELY BELIEVE that if all South Africans would cherish the value of respect, then our society’s transformation would make us a good model among the nations of the world. When that happens, we will lose count of the millions of people who come knocking at our door to become part of this great nation that will be tremendously blessed, because of our respect for one another. As a nation that loves to sing, let us sing songs of joy and peace, songs that unite and inspire confidence, and not songs of war.

■ **The Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP is the president of the African Christian Democratic Party**