



SUNDAY SUN Sunday 18 July 2010

NOW HEAR THIS! WITH **KENNETH MESHOE**

Shocked by a pastor's hymn to communism

ON SATURDAY 10 April, I attended the funeral of the late Dr Molefi Sefularo in GaRankuwa. As I am a family man myself, I was delighted to hear what the late Sefularo's family had to say about him.

His children spoke about the love and care their father had for them and their mother. As I heard his wife refer to him as a friend, I concluded that the man we were paying our last respects to was no ordinary man, but a responsible man of principle, who cared for his family. Our country needs more fathers who will love and care for their children, and more husbands who will love their wives and be faithful to them.

What I did not appreciate was what the two reverends who were part of the ceremony did. The first reverend was asked to open the service in prayer. As we all stood and waited for him to pray, he, to my surprise, asked us to observe a moment of silence. Thereafter, he just returned to his seat. I felt pain in my heart as I knew that the family was hurting after losing a man they loved and, as a result of such hurt, needed God's touch.

Is it proper for pastors and reverends to have moments of silence at funeral services? Can a moment of silence bring comfort to the bereaved and heal broken hearts? When we are in trouble and need help, do we have a moment of silence or do we pray? Is having a moment of silence a politically-correct practice born out of compromise or is it biblical? I'm just asking.

The second reverend was called to give a message. He started by saying that he was not going to preach or read from the Bible, but that he was going to read from the book of the communists. I couldn't believe my ears! I thought the man

was joking, but he was serious. All the preceding speakers had spoken words of comfort, except for him, and he was a minister, nogal.

He then sang three songs about communism. One of the songs he sang went something like this: "My mother was a kitchen girl, my father was a garden boy, that's why I am a communist." To say that I was disappointed and shocked is an understatement.

I don't have a problem with communist songs sung at political rallies. But are they appropriate at a funeral service? When a family is hurting after losing a loved one, is singing about a mother who was a kitchen girl and a father who was a garden boy going to bring them comfort? Has our nation drifted so far from God that we are following leaders who don't want to pray to Him, read from his Word or to sing praises to Him? Has God become irrelevant to some in our democratic South Africa? Is it acceptable to politicize funeral services while family members are mourning? I'm just asking.

I believe that the pain of losing a loved one is felt by all, whether one is religious or not. Because of this pain, words of comfort must be spoken, preaching must take place and God, who is able to heal our innermost pain, must be asked to heal the broken hearted.

If there are pastors and reverends who don't want to pray and preach at funeral services, then perhaps they should be advised to leave the pulpit and do something else.

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