

The Legacy of Apartheid

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It is now 2010. The system of Apartheid is now 16 years behind us, and we serve, and are served, by a freely elected democratic government.

What happened in those 46 years when Apartheid dominated (1948 to 1994)?

Government, with its policy of apartheid = separateness, physically relocated millions of people who did not fit, that is black, Indian, coloured persons.

Because of having a very vocal opposition in Parliament, and the eyes of the world on them, the government could not just dump people somewhere in the veldt to fend for themselves. So the government had to build rudimentary housing for these people, and to enable them to access work, had to build railways and roads, provide schools, hospitals and other infrastructural elements.

Big business, motivated largely by the churches, looked at the plight of these township-dwellers, and poured large amounts of aid into them.

Among the black nations of South Africa there are two very beautiful symbolic gestures related to giving and receiving. When receiving something from someone else both hands are used. The symbolism is saying, "Whatever you give is too much to take with one hand (that would be insulting) as what you are giving is abundant and overflowing." In a similar way, when giving something, it is given with both hands together, symbolically saying, "I am giving you everything, my all."

However, one of the fruits of the legacy of apartheid is that an 'entitlement mindset' has been created among the previously disadvantaged in South Africa. This has been fed by the politicians lobbying for votes, "Vote ANC and we will provide jobs." Lies. No politician can generate jobs of sufficient quantity and quality for the population. All they can do is to nurture the economy and hope that as business expands, jobs will be created.

However part of the entitlement mentality affects those who get work. They do not want to actually work, and look for ways of doing the least possible. And they are forced to join one or other trade union, and before much time has passed they will be on strike, demanding better wages — as their entitlement rights.

Employers, who had experience of this, employed persons who were willing to work — Zimbabweans, Zambians, Mozambicans, Nigerians, Congolese — all from outside South Africa. The South African black who were unable to find work, because they are unemployable, then attacked these foreigners, saying, "They are stealing our jobs." A statement of entitlement if ever there was one! This racism was given by government and media an invented term, "Xenophobic violence." Another part of the legacy of Apartheid is the mindset in blacks that only whites are capable of racism. Sadly, it is not a joke. In Parliament, Tony Leon, in opposition, said, "South Africa has a problem. It is

HIV / AIDS. What is the government going to do about it?" Our then State President, Thabo Mbeki, said to him, "You are a racist." Therefore government did not, for a very long time, address constructively what could be done about the problem.

Then Government had a brilliant idea, looking at other countries round the world that run national lotteries, they introduced Lotto to South Africa. At one level it is a good idea as it generates funds to support charities, and so some of the money generated indirectly reaches the poor. However, at another level it is a taxation on the poor. For a stake of a few Rand — "Everyone can afford that, can't they?" — you have a chance of perhaps winning millions. But, your chance of winning is 1 in 10 trillion. That means – no chance!

Lotto is clever, it hands out many small prizes. These are a sales trick to keep people betting more. Why do you not put your money on horses. The odds there are nowhere near as high, perhaps 1 in 20, and you can make informed choices of what to back. No gambling in any shape or form is a dead loss.

Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?

For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her." Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. (Mat 26:6-15)

"The poor... The poor..." is a constant cry.

The legacy of apartheid is that the poor have become accustomed to receiving handouts, on a proverbial plate. Those handouts may be in the form of feeding schemes, but are also more substantial in terms of housing — the latest being RDP (Reconstruction and Development) housing.

These houses are very basic and primitive. The consequences are that, because they are tiny, and on tiny bits of land, and the houses are all jam-packed on top of one another an instant ghetto / slum is created. The houses are only very slightly better — in being slightly more substantial than shacks built in informal settlements.

The blog ghettoverit.wordpress.com says:

The RDP is a plan to address the many social and economic problems facing our country – problems such as...

- *violence*
- *Iack of housing*
- *Iack of jobs*
- *inadequate education and health care*
- *Iack of democracy*

- *a failing economy.*

However like many of the programmes put in place by our beloved government it has dismally failed. Besides the fact that almost half the houses that it builds for our poverty stricken South Africa are dismal, dispicably put together pieces of somewhat thrown together architecture, they have become no more than just money making schemes for poor and rich alike. I guess the question on everybody's mind right now is "What the hell is she talking about?" Well it is common knowledge, and by common knowledge I mean to the gossip mongers/ local church going folk in the townships, and the local government in any city or town in South Africa that these so called RDP houses for the poor are given and awarded to those who have connections within the local government. This is despite the fact that there are individuals who have been waiting on the list for more than ten years, to get an RDP house. ...

The problem here is that no one takes the blame for what is clearly a system riddled with corruption. When one asks the local municipality about the awarding of RDP houses we are only told that they are not responsible for the awarding of houses and we should speak to the construction companies in charge ,The ANC has its promises. Free housing was one of them. I'm still baffled by the fact that people have waited this long for such a basic need.

Yes, it is a basic need — but, that again is an empowerment statement! Like the following:

"We demand better housing for all!"

Yes, it is a basic need, but it is an opportunity — which many have grabbed with open arms — to make a lot of money quickly, with little or no need to deliver.

Jesus said, "You always have the poor with you," confronting the attitudes of the disciples to the waste — the oil could have been sold for the poor — and Judas Iscariot was so offended that he ran and betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. What did he do with that? Give it to the poor? No — he came to his senses, too late, and threw the money back at the Jewish authorities, who, because it was blood money, and tainted, bought a plot of land, the potter's field.

So, we have a problem ...

A problem is not an obstacle, although for many, it becomes that, paralyzing them from moving forward. A problem is an opportunity.

Nobody has ever taught South Africans (of any race or culture) about the value of money. It is an in-born feature of children to want things. Just watch a child in a supermarket, pushed in a pram. Their hands clutch at anything and everything in reach. When it is taken away, there is a huge temper tantrum. We are all beggars at heart.

Adult South Africans are no better than children. We want. We see ... we buy — on credit — when we have no money — whether we need it or not.

We break two commandments of God:

I am GOD, your God, No other gods, only me.

And:

You shall not covet ...

Money is a god, which we worship — yes, I acknowledge my guilt too — because it enables us to get the things we want — covet.

This behavior guarantees we are stuck in poverty. **Poverty is an addiction.**

Another part of the fruit of Apartheid is that it is easy to pass the blame onto someone else. When we point fingers we forget that three fingers point back at ourselves. Two days ago, now, South Africa's soccer team, *Bafana Bafana*, were eliminated from the World Cup. The first reaction I heard from commentators was: "The coach is to blame. Fire the coach!"

In recent years South Africa's inflation was spiralling out of control. The then Governor of the South African Reserve Bank, Tito Mboweni, countered this by pushing up interest rates, to make credit unaffordable to many. Instead of seeing that he was doing a very good and important thing, the average man in the street blamed him because of rising prices. But, they were the ones buying on credit and pushing up inflation. They ignored the fingers pointing at themselves.

Towards a solution ...

I have written a book entitled, "*Wealth be my friend: finding financial intelligence in the journey from poverty to wealth*". This is available from Trafford.com or Amazon.com (click to follow link).

In the 1970s I worked on *The Star* newspaper. They ran a campaign called CARE — Cleaner Air, Rivers and Environment. Wherever we went we had a driver, in a car with *The Star* emblazoned on the side. On a longer journey, we may have stopped and bought refreshment — cold drink or a snack, and we would share with the (black) driver. He would finish his portion and throw the garbage out the car window. We would remonstrate, saying, "You cannot do that as people see *The Star* breaking its own word from the CARE campaign, and would call us, correctly, hypocrites." The driver would reply, "But my brothers are paid to pick up the garbage. If I do not throw it on the street they will have no work."

I was speaking, at the weekend, to a couple who had just visited Namibia. They commented that the towns were spotlessly clean — no litter anywhere. That is a fruit of a nation not taught to live in (false) expectations of entitlement.

The solution is to help the poor to take responsibility for their own destinies. To recognise their addiction to poverty, which leads them ever-deeper into debt.

