

Taking **CONFIDENCE** from the vote of **'NO-CONFIDENCE'**

With a spiritual lesson from the White House (USA)

By: Mike Burnard



8 August 2017 will be remembered in South Africa as the day when the *'nuclear bomb'* of South African politics was averted as President Jacob Zuma survived his eighth vote of 'no-confidence', despite the mountain of evidence of corrupt conduct that has emerged in recent months. On the previous seven occasions that the opposition have tabled a vote of 'no-confidence', the ANC has remained steadfast in its support of its beleaguered president. On Tuesday, the vote was a watershed for the liberation movement: around **30** of the **223** ANC MPs who voted sided with the opposition. The final count:

177 MPs voted in favour of the motion, while **198** opposed it (with **9** abstentions). Since the opposition had 151 MPs (three were absent due to illness), it meant that **at least 29**, and possibly as many as 35 ANC MPs 'jumped ship'. This equates to at least **one in every seven** ANC members of parliament expressing dissatisfaction with the president elect. **The vote was indeed a victory for Zuma, but a defeat for the ruling party of South Africa.**

For South Africans, regardless of political preference, race or cultural background, a lot of confidence can be taken from the result of the vote of 'no-confidence'.

1. There was no violence

Yes, there was a lot of singing, a lot of dancing, a lot of shouting and too many speeches, but unlike many other African nations where conflict is solved through the barrel of a gun, there were no incidents of violence, no retaliation and no attacks.

Violent political conflict in Africa is the frequent result of a leading political party and the official opposition both being rooted in a power-based culture that finds the ultimate solution for conflict in displays of power through violence.

The approach to the vote was therefore probably more important than the vote itself and South Africans should take confidence in the fact that the leading political parties, in general, conducted themselves in a way that reflected a willingness to seek a better future for all its citizens, without reverting to violence. In an African context where a fear/power worldview dominates political sentiment and often derails transition efforts, the peaceful manner in which the vote of 'no-confidence' took place is an answer to the prayers of millions: that power can be challenged in a civilised way.

2. There were no surprises

Many South Africans hoped for the vote to succeed, for the president to resign and for the entire cabinet to be dissolved. This scenario, however, might have provided an illusion of change, but it would have created long-term chaos. If the vote succeeded, the speaker, Ms Baleka Mbete, would have become the new acting president, giving the National Assembly 30 days to elect a new president from among its members. The new president would thus have needed the support of a majority of the National Assembly members. This means that the new president would have been from the governing party (ANC) since the other parties could never muster a majority. The newly elected president could then have re-appointed most of the cabinet ministers who served in Mr Zuma's cabinet.

By passing a vote of 'no-confidence', uncertainty, and to a large extent chaos within the governing ANC, would have been created. The ANC would have had to elect someone new into office as president and they are not yet prepared to do so. For example, one of the favourite candidates, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, could not be elected because she is not currently a member of the National Assembly. Chaos always leads to instability and instability to uncertainty; the one thing South African politics can do without at present.

The process started by the vote was therefore probably more important than the vote itself, and South Africans should take confidence in the fact that there is now a slow, but progressive process in motion, not a dramatic change that challenges the worldview of the ruling party. Such a change could have been disastrous.

3. There were no losers



Amazingly, and paradoxically, both the ruling party and the opposition felt a sense of victory. It was indeed a win for the opposition even though they lost the vote. Afterwards, one after another of the leaders of the opposition spoke cheerfully about the political future and of the health of South Africa's democracy. Economic Freedom Fighter's leader Julius Malema employed a well-known Africa proverb: "When you want to eat an elephant you do it bit-by-bit".

The opposition may have lost the battle, but there is a sense of confidence that they could win the war. After all, it is clear that Zuma is now their greatest electoral asset, with several polls (including the

respected *Afrobarometer*), showing that across race and class, trust in Zuma has collapsed since he was returned to power for a second term in 2014. The vote may have been a victory for Zuma, but in the longer term it is likely to be seen as a major defeat for the ANC.

The response to the vote was probably more important than the vote itself, and South Africans should take confidence in the fact that democracy still exists and remains a guiding force in national decisions. In an African context, this is a precious commodity and an answer to prayer.

4. There were no delays

A key contributor to political instability is delayed processes and delayed promises. The fact that Speaker Baleka Mbete approved the vote of 'no-confidence' to be a secret ballot, the fact that it took place on time, the fact that the voting was transparent and the fact that the results were made available immediately, bore testimony to an efficient process that eliminated any uncertainties.

The transparency of the vote was probably more important than the vote itself, and South Africans should take confidence in the fact that processes of this magnitude can still be done in a cohesive and dignified manner.

From a Christian Perspective

A day before the voting took place in South Africa's parliament, INcontext received an email from a friend who is in touch with Dr Jim Anderson, a member of the US **PRESIDENTIAL PRAYER TEAM (PPT)**, which reminded us again of how easy it is to move from a NATION OF PRAYER to a NATION OF DESPAIR. The short report served as a renewed encouragement that God remains sovereignly in charge and He ordains, keeps and deposes leaders for seasons, as He sees fit. (*Daniel 2:21 "He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning."*) It is our privilege and duty to pray for those who lead our nations.

The Presidential Prayer Team (PPT), an evangelical group in the USA, devote themselves to raise a shield of prayer for the US administration, the president, the nation and all its leaders (<http://www.uspray365.com/>).

Dr Jim Anderson, one of the PPT members, sent a report on 1 August 2017 with an update on Bible studies held in the White House. Dr Anderson emphasised that the intent of the report was NOT to imply that everyone in the USA should be in agreement with what the administration is doing, or even that anyone should change his or her opinion about the president. However, the report hopes to encourage Christians to pray for God to be uplifted in the individual lives of the leaders in Washington DC, and that the Lord will give wisdom, love and courage as they make decisions affecting people in the USA and around the world.

Dr Anderson started the report as follows:

We believe this report will encourage you in your prayers for the administration – especially the report about Bible Studies being conducted – with the Vice President, and with cabinet members, such as Ben Carson, Jeff Sessions and Rick Perry. The report follows, but first we would like to quote two scriptural passages and introduce you to the Presidential Prayer Team.



It is quite common for citizens of a country to criticise their leaders without praying for them. But God has instructed us in the New Testament that we should pray for those in authority over us.

- 1 Timothy 2:1-4 "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

The Lord has sovereignly allowed these authorities to come to power:

- Romans 13:1 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

With these scriptures as a clear foundation, the PPT submitted the following report:

[Tuesday, August 01, 2017 8:08:00 AM] AP

There is a spiritual awakening underway in Washington, DC and at the White House, which is often lost in the midst of the daily negative news out of the nation's capital.

Some of the most powerful people in America have been gathering weekly to learn more about God's Word, and this Trump Cabinet Bible study is making history as what has been called "the most evangelical Cabinet in history."

"These are godly individuals that God has raised to a position of prominence in our culture," says Ralph Drollinger of Capitol Ministries.

Drollinger is a former college basketball star and NBA player who founded Capitol Ministries with the idea that if you change the hearts of lawmakers, then their Christian worldview will guide them to make good policies.

He's started Bible studies in 40 state capitals, a number of foreign capitals, teaches weekly studies in the US House and Senate and now leads about a dozen members of President Trump's Cabinet in weekly studies of the Scriptures.

Health Secretary Tom Price, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Agriculture Secretary Sunny Perdue, and CIA Director Mike Pompeo are just a few of the regulars. America's 'top cop', Attorney General Jeff Sessions, also attends the study.

"It's the best Bible study that I've ever taught in my life. They are so teachable; they're so noble; they're so learned," Drollinger said.

President Trump is invited to attend the Bible studies, too. Each week he receives a copy of Drollinger's teaching. In addition, Vice President Pence is also planning to join the study as his schedule permits. He also serves as a sponsor.

SOURCES:

- <https://mg.co.za/article/2017-08-09-no-confidence-vote-a-victory-for-zuma-but-a-defeat-for-the-anc>
- <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2017-08-07-what-happens-if-the-vote-of-no-confidence-succeeds/#.WY09uoiGPRY>
- <http://www.uspray365.com/>



INcontext
INTERNATIONAL

There is no copyright on this document but please acknowledge the source:

www.incontextinternational.org
mike@incontextministries.org