

Bishop tackles Zuma for Jesus claim

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President Jacob Zuma's claims that the ANC will rule "until Jesus returns" are anachronistic and dangerous, Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba said on Friday.

In a speech prepared for delivery at a church award ceremony in Sophiatown, Johannesburg, he said Zuma had the "perfect right" to express the hope that voters would keep his party in government until the second coming.

"But it is another matter to predict the party will rule until the end of time as we know it," he said.

Makgoba was reacting to Zuma's statement at a weekend ANC rally in Mpumalanga that the ANC "will rule until the Son of Man comes".

"He must come back while we are still in power," Zuma said.

Makgoba said it took only a glance at history to show the enormous damage that one-party rule had done to Africa, not least through encouraging greedy elites to hog resources.

In this light, the president's comments were unfortunate.

They were also anachronistic, reflecting a 1960s or 70s view of the continent.

A 21st century perspective on Africa should rather reflect the understanding expressed in the African Union's own Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance.

"And, finally, the President's predictions of unending ANC rule are potentially dangerous," Makgoba said.

"They might encourage those who have a strong stake in - and economic motives for - prolonging ANC rule indefinitely, and tempt them to take unconstitutional action to preserve it."

Makgoba said neither the Anglican Church, nor the South African Council of Churches (SACC) wanted to "colonise" Jesus, as some had claimed.

"The reason that we, and others in broader civil society, are unhappy with the President's comments, is not actually a matter of religion at all," he said.

"It is a matter of public policy."

Earlier on Friday, the SACC said in a statement that though it had expressed reservations about the use of Jesus' second coming as a marker of ANC rule, it realised Zuma's statement was more about his confidence in the ANC than anything else.

"We therefore need to lay to rest any impressions that may have been created that the SACC wishes to privatise the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," it said.

"Jesus is bigger than both the ANC and the SACC."

The Friends of Jacob Zuma Trust had accused the SACC trying to "privatise" Jesus and turn Christianity into a cult. - Sapa

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/bishop-tackles-zuma-for-jesus-claim-1.447627?ot=inmsa.ArticlePrintPageLayout.ot>