

## **DR ALLAN BOESAK MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **RESIGNATION FROM LEGISLATURE AND FROM COPE.**

I have today informed the leadership of COPE that I am ending my membership of the party and that I have tendered my resignation as a member of the Western Cape Provincial Legislature with immediate effect. The Speaker of the House has received an official communication confirming the latter.

When I joined Cope in December 2008 I said expressly that I wished no position of leadership in the structures of the party. This was again repeated in the letter to the party leadership on February 4 2009 when I was approached by the leadership and various groupings with a request to make myself available as premier candidate. I then again expressed my deep reluctance to take up public office through Cope and it was only after the severest pressures that I conceded to assist the party in the elections.

From the very beginning the party structures, such as they were, were characterized by faction fighting, strife, pitched battles for political supremacy and duplicity. The deep resentments caused by the irregularities with the list process and the interim leadership situation persisted and made normal work almost impossible. At this point the party structures continue to be in disarray; many good people, hard workers in the party are under suspension because they raised critical voices that leadership in the Western Cape do not wish to be heard. Many others have resigned.

Like others, I chose not to attend those debilitating meetings but to rather concentrate on doing what I can to build the image of the party in other ways whilst serving the South African people through the position I held in the Western Cape Parliament. This I have tried to do as sincerely as I can – in the Legislature, in my work on the Standing Committees, and on the public stage, hoping to rise above the mud in which COPE stood. The record speaks for itself. The leadership also knows that I – as I made unequivocally clear when I agreed to take up an official position in the party structures – would and have continued with my work in civil society, in the church and as extraordinary Professor at the University of Stellenbosch; all responsibilities that demanded some of my time.

It seems that the mud is rising. I have no desire to subject my family, myself or my calling to serve our people to these sorts of indignities and

destructive politicking. This is not at all about the statement of the Youth, it goes in fact far deeper: it is about the true identity of the Congress of the People; Its true understanding of itself as a modern democratic political party, its true vision and its true destiny facing the challenges of our young democracy. I deeply regret that this situation has now come to pass.

But working for the integrity of this democracy and the people of South Africa is what I have always been called, and committed to do. I am therefore returning to civil society where my work on the Globalisation Project with the churches in South Africa and Germany, the world-wide ecumenical movement and my involvement in civil society are growing more intense and are demanding more and more of my attention. Here, as before, I can work with dignity and purpose. Not a day passes that we are not confronted with the challenges that threaten the stability of our democracy. These I will continue to identify and meet as I have been trying to do the last forty years of my life.

When Cope was formed it held up a vibrant hope to the people of South Africa that our democracy could be saved and that our people could be brought together. I, like so many across the land, believed in that promise, found courage in that hope. My prayer is that Cope will find that hope and vision again and so fulfill the promise it had made to the people of South Africa now almost one year ago.

Looking back at the past year I will always be proud to have been part of the moment Cope held such a magnificent vision before the people of South Africa, and I share the pride in what Cope has been able to achieve in the elections despite the many difficulties. I thank my colleagues in COPE and in the Legislature who truly have the people's interests at heart for the privilege of having worked with them and I wish them well in the future.

Allan Boesak  
November 3, 2009