

Material circumstances change much more easily than ideational notions. Ideas tend to remain fixed. And philosophies and ideologies, in my opinion, derive from technological and scientific advances and not the other way around. Technological and scientific advances bring about the substantial changes that occur in our lives; discoveries of new tools are the catalyst for new ways and understandings of existence.

That is why imposition of democracy by Western powers on Africa and other countries does not take because abstracted understandings are not supported by the power of the technological and practical culture that give rise to them.

People upon whom western models of democracy are imposed have different relationships with their environment and with one another. These relationships are based on the technologies that they have developed. As can be seen in the Arab uprisings going on at present, once people are introduced to new technologies that carry the message of democracy, they gain new understandings of existence. Those who use the new technologies change but the old guard which does not, remains tied to old understandings of government: autocratic understandings that regard the governed as subjects rather than as independent beings with inalienable human rights. But their subjects now have experience of democracy through technology and they want more of that freedom.

In South Africa, the majority of poor people who do not have access to new technologies are tied to old values through manual labour and for them western democracy will never have substantive meaning until they have been freed by new technologies. Philosophy and ideologies are understood only after practical experience of empowerment through tools occurs. The more advanced the tools the more advanced the understanding. The Freedom Charter which has been in existence since 1955 has made little difference to people's understanding of their rights. It is an ideological document and does not have the power of the practical. Poor people remain drawers of water and hewers of wood.

Substantive change does not come about through ideologies and philosophies. Scientific and technological advances bring about the changes in material circumstances that lead to advances in human understanding and development. That is why it was The Bible that was used to conquer Africa; technology would have brought equality.

