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SECTION V : DOCUMENTATION

Bishop Desmond Tutu, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, recently addressed students at the University of Natal. Below, we publish the complete text of his address, entitled : "The South African Reality."

Beauty is in the Beholder's Eye

You probably heard the story of the little boy who saw a flight of geese and called out to his mother, "Mummy, look at those geese!" Mummy quite rightly corrected her offspring, "No, darling, those are not geese. We say they are geese." Her little darling was not to be put off and retorted, "Well, they look like geese to me." This is just another way of saying that beauty does lie in the beholder's eye. Your perspective, who you are, all that has gone to make you who you are - all of this will determine very largely what you see and how you see it and what you take to be the reality of South Africa.

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1. EUCLIDEAN AXIOM

I could give you an axiom which behaves almost like one of those euclid produced. Take any important issue in South Africa at the present time and you can be sure that most Whites will come down on one side and most Blacks will be found on the opposite side. Or you could restate my axiom in this manner. What pleases most Whites in South Africa is sure to displease most Blacks and vice versa. Let's test this axiom for reasonable accuracy.

(a) FOREIGN INVESTMENT : Take the issue of foreign investment in South Africa. There is no doubt that most Whites would declare themselves totally in favour of continued foreign investment in South Africa. They might say this is because it would be the best way of helping to change apartheid and to bring about a better South Africa. But hardly any Whites would even begin to consider the merits of no further foreign investment in South Africa as a viable tool to persuade the participants in the political power

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game to go to the negotiating table to work together for a new kind of South Africa, a more just society where people were just people and not classified according to a biological irrelevancy and something for which they can neither be praised nor blamed - the colour of their skins.

Now, given the nature of our security laws which make provision for something called economic sabotage for which if you were to be found guilty, the minimum mandatory sentence is 5 years in gaol, given this, very few Blacks are prepared to articulate their views. And, of course, on SABC TV which is noted for being totally unbiased and fair and almost the only Blacks who get paraded on the box and whose views will be repeated by dear Mr Cliff Saunders and the editorial comment are those Blacks whose views accord with those of the system and the establishment. But you know that many of the Black organisations which have declared themselves on this issue have usually regarded foreign investment as something that tended to bolster what most Blacks regard as a vicious and unjust system.

b) CHANGE : Or let us take the matter of change. The government and its minions and supporters have been giving out that they are moving away from discrimination based on race. (Do you remember that was the claim made by Mr. Pik Botha so many light years ago when he was still S.A. Ambassador to the U.N.) and many people, especially Whites, grow positively ecstatic about all the changes they see about them. Man, look at all this change - it is leaving many even bewildered. There are the so-called international hotels and restaurants. Now Blacks can actually sit down and eat and drink with Whites in public places in the towns. Nobody says anything about the absurdity of a hotel having to become international in order to serve local nationals. Look at all these discriminatory signs that are coming down in an avalanche. Now we can sit together in lawcourts, in libraries, we can try to be patient together in long queues at the Post Office. Separate exits and entrances are being abolished as quickly as possible. We can now share park benches without anybody thinking they will be contaminated by being cheek by jowl with someone of an inferior race denoted by his colour. We Blacks would have liked to feel equally ecstatic. But we really can't.

/Much of the vaunted .....

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Much of the vaunted change is really restoring things to the condition they were before 1948 when the Nationalists came to power and showed their obsession with segregation. They really went to town then. You had to separate this and separate that. Now when this policy has failed abysmally to remove tension and friction as it was claimed it would do and only because it has won South Africa an unfortunate reputation in the world, we are expected to applaud them when they try to reverse their disastrous policies. In any case, what does it mean to most Blacks that some of their few more well-to-do brothers and sisters can now eat in those expensive 5 star hotels when they must still live in the black ghettos with very few of the amenities that Whites take for granted - adequate streetlighting, paving along the tarred streets, playgrounds for their children, swimming pools etc ?

Soweto with over a million people has only one public swimming bath. Why should Blacks be thrilled by the removal of discriminatory signs here and there when they must bear the brunt of unemployment, totally inadequate accommodation in what we call the matchbox type of houses ? The much vaunted changes are for Blacks largely cosmetic, designed to fool the outside world and to try to reduce the black pressure for fundamental change. No, the sort of change we want is that which deals with the matter of political powersharing. Political power holds the key to all other kinds of power - economic, social, legal etc.

Everything else will always be concessions depending on the whim of those who have political power - giving or withholding the concessions when they felt like. No, we are really not interested in the crumbs of concessions falling from the master's table. We want to be there, deciding the menu together.

(c) RUGBY TOUR : Most Whites will be thrilled to bits if the Irish Rugby Tour does happen. Needless to say, most Blacks will be disgusted.

(d) U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION : Most Whites were in the 7th heaven of delight at Mr Reagan's winning the presidential election. You know what Blacks feel.

/ (e) ZIMBABWE .....

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(e) ZIMBABWE : Most Whites are glad at the troubles in Zimbabwe - most Blacks are saddened.

PATRIOTISM : I have probably demonstrated the validity of my euclidian axiom. But I want to refer to one last example. Snd that is the whole question of defence and the national service as well as patriotism. We are exhorted day in and day out to purchase defence bonds. We are told of a total onslaught which the country is facing, spearheaded by Communists, Marxists and everybody else who criticises apartheid and the hallowed South African way of life. Consequently, we must have a total strategy to counteract this dastardly total onslaught from the Russians and their satelites who are greedy for our wonderful natural and strategic resources.

Now there's a funny thing that has happened. During the 1939-45 World War II we Blacks were among the most loyal supporters of South Africa's war effort against the Nazis. I remember how we township children used to rush to the roadside whenever there was a convoy going up North to wave the brave soldiers, Black and White, goodbye. We were very fond of playing soldiers and our chests filled with pride when a member of our family was in uniform (even if it meant for Blacks that they were going to fight the pride of Rommel's desert rats armed only with assegais.) And who were opposed to this war effort ? Many, many Afrikaners. Soldiers in uniform used to be drummed out of White D.R. Churches and people like Mr. B.J. Vorster and General van den Bergh and others openly supported the Nazis and for their sympathies were interned. It is people like these who today want to read us lessons in patriotism, and I must say I find it extremely galling.

Things have changed remarkably. Very few Blacks would want to be seen in army uniform today. Those who do wear it, are regarded as traitors to our liberation cause. What are they fighting for - to maintain the pass laws by which they are harassed as if they were 4th grade citizens,

/to uphold Bantu Education .....

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to uphold Bantu Education which was designed deliberately to maim Blacks educationally, to train them for perpetual serfdom, where the Government spends over R600 p.a. on a White child and not even as much as R50 p.a. on a Black child ? What are they fighting for - to maintain the migratory Labour System by which not through accident but by deliberate government policy Black family life is being destroyed ? What are they fighting for, to ensure that even when they have the same qualification as their White counterpart and are doing the same job, they must be paid far less ? What are they fighting for - so that they are deprived arbitrarily of their South African citizenship and made citizens of some fraudulent Bantustan meant to be a ghetto of poverty and an inexhaustible reservoir of cheap labour ? What are they fighting for - to entrench their own oppression and exploitation in the most vicious system the world has seen since Nazism ? No, South Africa as presently ordered is not worth fighting or dying for and very few Blacks will be found ready to risk the ostracism of their fellow Blacks by donning a defence force uniform.

Now what is the situation in the White community ? Why, the Afrikaners who are largely opposed to General Smut's war effort are now in the forefront. It is a terrible disgrace if your son wants to be a conscientious objector. He is seen as having dragged the family name in the gutter. The D.R. Church gives its spiritual blessing to all this bellicosity, that same church which used to turn soldiers away from its services as it does today when it turns Blacks away from them. You shouldn't really worship God together. I suppose if Heaven has no apartheid, some people are going to find it extremely uncomfortable and they might decide to boycott Heaven and go to the warmer place.

And so we see again Blacks in the main on the one side and Whites on the other. The Whites have right on their side they claim. Blacks have terrorists. If anybody has not yet told you then I am afraid I must

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tell you - we are already engaged in a low level civil war in South Africa. Do you think that is a typical Tutu hyperbole ? Look at the facts - when the SADF goes to Maputo to strike against those ANC, so-called terrorists, don't you have South Africans in the army ? Then who were killed on the other side - were they not fellow South Africans ? Is that what civil war means ?

Most Whites were cock a hoop about that strike on Maputo. Ya, the SADF has taught those bloody terrorists a lesson. What stunned Blacks more than anything else though was how even newspapers they had thought were on their side wrote their stories of Maputo as if their only readership was White.

Those people Whites call terrorists happen to be our children, our brothers, our fathers. When your brother commits murder he is no less your brother for that. Most Blacks support the ANC in its goal of a liberated South Africa which will have a genuine democracy. They may not all agree about its methods. So Maputo has been painful, but those newspapers wrote from a White perspective and declared more clearly just on which side they really are in the liberation struggle. The pain of Maputo was exacerbated by the reckless and unfeeling action of the government banning the memorial services last Sunday. Now we are being told even when we may or may not mourn. Can you imagine what Afrikaners would feel if they were told they couldn't celebrate December 16th ?

When freedom comes, every institution, be it the Church, University, Press, Bank, Business etc. will be judged according to whether it advanced or hindered the liberation struggle. The trouble is that very few Whites believe we Blacks are going to be free and then everyone will be truly free. They are deluded by a government that tells them Whites will run this country forever. That is a dangerous lie. I urge Whites to take sides - and to join us who are on the winning side because our cause is just and moral and righteous. I invite Whites to make friends with Blacks whilst there is still time. Tomorrow may be too late.

/Yes, we are .....

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Yes, we are a dangerously polarised and divided land. But that, my friends, is the measure of the success of this viciously evil policy of apartheid. That is what it was designed to do. It was meant to keep political power in the hands of a small White minority. These people have decided to balkanise our motherland into totally unviable pieces of land. They say the Whites form one nation and are the true citizens of South Africa. They say Blacks form several nations. The Zulu and the Xhosa are far closer ethnically than the German, and the Portugese for e.g. by what alchemy is possible that Germans, English, French, Dutch, Swedes, etc can form one nation whereas Blacks almost as a matter of course should form separate nations? We even have that most extraordinary thing - that the Xhosas don't form one nation. They are that epoch-making phenomenon, Transkeian Xhosas and Ciskeian Xhosas and they must all develop along separate lines to independent fraudulent nationhood recognised only by South Africa and her satellites. Of course, the subtleties of all this thinking are beyond me, but then I'm only a Bantu and one Cabinet Minister pointed out that we are notoriously slow thinkers. These people foist a largely unwanted leadership on Blacks of Bantustan leaders - those in community councils, whereas most of our authentic leaders are on Robben Island, in exile or elsewhere in prison.

Apartheid, separate development, vertical differentiation, call it what you will - is a strategem, part of the total strategy. No, it is the total strategy to keep political power in the hands of a White minority. Now the government said through that much repudiated and unlamented man, Connie Mulder, when he was Minister of so-called Plural Relations (we were the Plurals - now we are cooperatives) got up in Parliament and I can assure you he was not drunk nor was he acting in a play called "Alice in Wonderland", and said their policy when taken to its logical conclusions means that there will be no Black South Africans. That is quite something. Here we are outnumbering White South Africans 5 to one and one day by the stroke of a pen we cease to be. Well, in a manner of speaking. You see they are dedicated to unscrambling the Urban omelette of a plural society.

/We will be there .....

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We will be there but won't be there, if you see what I mean.

The government is determined to coopt several Blacks into a middle class. They will have all kinds of concessions - substantial concessions to improve their so-called quality of life. I think they will do away with even residential segregation for these highly privileged Blacks who will then be a formidable barrier between the "have" Whites and the "not have" Blacks. They will be resolute defenders of a status quo that gives them so many benefits and privileges. And what about the vast majority of Blacks? - well these will be consigned to the poverty, starvation and malnutrition - the slow death of the Bantustans and their resettlement camps, where human beings, God's children, are dumped as if they were just things, just sacks of potatoes. You have got several adequate accommodation, not accidentally but again by the deliberate policy of a Christian government. They starve not because there is no food. After all we boast of exporting food to starving Zambia. No, they are starving because the political ideology decrees that it must be so. Can you imagine the anguish and the agony then of being Black, where you are an alien in your native motherland; where you are stripped of your birthright, your citizenship just like that?

We believe that this is all totally contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ, that it is blasphemous and wholly evil in its essence, totally immoral and that's what is done to God's children to uphold so-called Christian Western Civilisation.

2. ROLE OF STUDENTS :

What is your role? I hope very much that in the University perhaps for the first time in your life, you will realise that education is not really about how to get a formula for passing exams. It is not about what to think but about how to think. In this country we are in such desperate straits because people have been browbeaten into conformity. People have been trained not to rock the boat, they must toe the party line, they couldn't say 'boo' to a goose. They are afraid to ask "but why?"

/Maybe you will learn .....



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Maybe you will learn here to have critical questioning minds and you will be encouraged to ask questions such as the following : Why should the poorer section of the community be expected to pay for its travesty of an education when far more well to do have free compulsory education ? Why does the government spend so much on one White child and less than a 10th of that on a Black child ? Why is the infant mortality rate for Blacks 240 per 1000 when it is negligible for Whites ? Why should there be such horrendous laws ? Why should people be banned without any reasons being given and why should there be detention without trial ? If there is evidence to ban or detain a person why is it not produced in an open court? Why would people sleep on the pavement whilst the house from which they have been evicted stands empty just because they are Indian and the area is reserved for so-called Whites ?

You have the vote, those of you who are White, and therefore you are not really impotent. You can express your dissatisfaction if you are dissatisfied. It takes only a few people to demonstrate their anger and the authorities will take notice.

It was students who were concerned with the ravages of hunger in the third world who started organisations such as "war on want," "oxfam." It was the agitation of students about nuclear disarmament which started groups such as campaign against nuclear disarmament and made government sit up and take notice. It was students who largely agitated e.g. against the American involvement in Vietnam and led to their country's withdrawal eventually. No, you have much power. You could protest and cause your parents to protest against censorship e.g. if those ladies and gentlemen on the censorship board are worried about what will happen to our morals if we read this or that book, see this or that film, can you imagine what has already happened to them exposed as they are to these pernicious influences ? Would the authorities demolish black homes if white bodies were interposed between those homes and the bulldozers ? You should decide now that as a lawyer you will refuse to practise if the laws are so

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blatantly unjust, where the onus is on the accused to prove this innocence against the traditions of the free world that the accused is presumed innocent until he is proved guilty. Can you imagine what would happen if judges, magistrates, lawyers, advocates, if all refused any longer to administer laws they know are unjust? Imagine what would happen if all the so-called English Universities opened their doors to all the races completely in residences etc. and said let the government try to close us - would it? Too many persons, too many institutions are really willing or unwilling collaborators in injustice, oppression and exploitation and you students are being prepared to work for a different kind of South Africa.

Imagine what will happen if Blacks get their freedom through violence - one thing will be that they will go to the statute book and change all references to 'Blacks' to 'White' and vice versa and viola you have your laws. Is that the kind of future you want? Well that is the future that this government is preparing for you and you must refuse to be party to this deliberate rushing headlong to national suicide and destruction. You must work earnestly for a new South Africa. There is still enough goodwill left in the black community for a negotiated settlement. It is still possible to buy valuable time by getting the white government to do certain dramatic acts which will change the atmosphere overnight and make the circumstances more propitious for a constitutional conference, or national convention.

- (a) a commitment to a common citizenship for all South Africa in an undivided South Africa. Blacks will fight for their land and their citizenship.
- (b) abolish the pass laws.
- (c) stop all forced population, removals. End bannings and detention without trial.
- (d) establish a unitary educational system.

/These would be the .....