

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING : CHURCH LEADERS AND SACR PRESIDUM
WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET :
PRETORIA, 7TH AUGUST 1980

The meeting was opened in prayer by the Chaplain-General:

We thank you dear Lord for this day. We thank you that we as Christians may gather in the Spirit of the Lord. We thank you that all of us may proclaim our dependence on you. That is what we need at this very important gathering. Give us your guidance in our discussions, let us talk to each other in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. We beg you for your blessing. Bless our wonderful country, and all its people. Bless all your servants here present this morning. Bless the Government of this country. Please our Lord, bless this meeting. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Prime Minister:

Dames en here, ek wil u hartelik verwelkom, by hierdie besondere vergadering. Ek hoop dat die van u wat ver gekom het het 'n aangename reis gehad.

Before giving you the opportunity to raise matters you should like to raise with us, I wish to welcome you here cordially and also wish to make a few introductory remarks on my part.

In spite of differences we might have, we also have common ground between us. And I am only going to mention a few.

Firstly, all of us believe in Christ our Lord. Secondly, we reject communism and its materialistic and atheistic doctrine. Thirdly, we reject violence as a means of undermining the State, and we denounce the activities of communist inspired organisations from outside the country, such as the ANC. Fourthly, we stand for freedom of religion.

I can go on mentioning other matters and principles but I think this is sufficient.

I take it that while the Church has certain duties and rights, we also accept the responsibilities of the State to maintain law and order and the right of self-determination of peoples especially in a country like South Africa.

I took note of what one of your members said to the Pretoria Press Club a few days ago and I quote: "Indeed our delegation to meet the Prime Minister must make it patently clear to the authorities and to everybody else that we have no political axes to grind. We represent no political party. We go as Christians to speak to fellow Christians".

And that is also the case with us on the Government's side here. I have here with me Minister S P Botha, Dr Koornhof, Minister Steyn, Minister Schabusch, Minister R F Botha, Minister Le Grange, Dr Hartzenberg, Mr Coetzee and Mr Morrison. I have also some of our advisors, General Malan, Mr de Pleessis of the Prime Minister's office, the Chaplain-General, Brigadier Coetzee, and Mr Krige, who is the press liaison officer in my department.

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Due to the fact that from time to time I am involved in discussions with various Church leaders, I want to state to you the basic principles I follow in such discussions. All the Churches with whom I have so far had discussions have both accepted these principles and agreed with them.

I see the State and the Church as two independent or autonomous bodies, both of which are appointed by God. Each with its own commission, task and field. For this reason the State does not want to meddle in the affairs of the Church and does not expect the Church to meddle in the affairs of the State. We, however, are a Christian State and are desirous of ruling according to Christian principles. For this reason the State is attentive to the voice of the Church, since both are concerned for the welfare of the people entrusted to their care. This means that I am, as head of a Christian Government always ready to recognise the right of the Church to present its points of view to the State on matters such as for example, social affairs or even possible incompatibilities.

A number of deputations from various Churches have already met with me this year and I have in my possession the points of view of these Churches and those of wellknown theologians belonging to different language groups. I believe it is not right for the Church to negotiate with the State on political assignments or on other purely political matters for the following reasons.

It is not the calling and the function of the Church. I consider it right and also my duty to negotiate on such matters with the relevant political leaders of the country. This I have always done and will continue to do. In any case the question is which Church must I negotiate with, especially when Churches differ among themselves. Churches in their evidence to the State differ quite radically one from the other as is shown in documents I have in my possession covering for example alternative national service, etc. But it cannot be expected of the State to make interpretation or pass judgements on various theological or Church points of view. Likewise Churches will not expect the State to declare itself on various theological or Church arguments and differences. I do, however, give Churches the assurance that my door is always open to them to enter into discussion on the basis of these principles in the interest of the peoples of this country.

I now wish to afford you, ladies and gentlemen, and your delegation the opportunity to raise the points you would like to discuss with us. My colleagues responsible for certain portfolios are present here and will give short replies. I suggest that we take two hours or a little bit more for the discussion. I am prepared to go beyond one o'clock. I suggest that we enable you to proceed with raising your points until 12.15 p.m. and then give my colleagues the opportunity to reply and then I will towards the end sum up the meeting.

But let me say at the outset that having put aside two hours, that does not mean that we can't have another meeting at a later stage in the year. I am pressed for time, as you will appreciate, but that does not mean that we will not be able to have another talk later in the year at an opportune date.

Once again, I welcome you.

Mr Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, Government officials, we wish to thank you for accepting to meet this delegation of the South African Council of Churches. This meeting is important for various reasons for the South African Council of Churches and the citizens of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of South Africa.

One, it is important that as a Council in this country we have the opportunity to state our case and that of the whole country to the Government of the day. Secondly, Sir, it is important because there is also the opportunity to clear the suspicion which has attached to the Council of Churches and particularly that with which certain individuals in this Council have been regarded. Thirdly, it is important because there is a crying need for more meetings of this nature. The country needs it as it braces itself to enter a new era when a new society completely unlike the present emerges. Fourthly, we meet as Christians, as you have already indicated Sir and therefore witness to a Christian faith. It was unthinkable that a professing Christian Government would refuse to meet its Christian subjects because this would not be in the spirit of Christian reconciliation. We wish to assure you Mr Prime Minister that we meet you and your Government officials as representative of the Churches in the Republic of South Africa with a mandate to make known to you their views, their observations, their considered opinion about the situation in our fatherland, South Africa. To place before you the feelings of the many many Christians, not necessarily the black Christians, but children of the Living God. We do this out of a Christian duty so that we may not have to appear before the court of history to be judged by posterity as having failed to do the only thing that was possible - namely to caution to warn and to give advice.

We are happy to meet you, Mr Prime Minister, for you Sir, unlike many others before you, have demonstrated unparalleled courage to have made certain utterances to which we are completely unaccustomed. Utterances which have given us as a people the hope of redemption. Utterances which really, if your people gave you the choice you would translate into action and would restore to the black man his human dignity and guarantee a peaceful settlement for all in the Republic of South Africa.

We have here in our delegation Rev Ngqobi, Rev Ulster, Rev Dudhla, Os Lubbe, Bishop Russell, Bishop Gottschalk, Rev A Losaba, Bishop Rapoo, Bishop Serote, Rev Masopa, Rev Maja, Os Tema, Rev S Smuts, Archbishop B Burnett, Rev P Storey, Bishop D Tutu, Mrs S Motlana, Mr Matt Stevenson and Mr Dan Vaughan.

Mr Prime Minister we thank you once again for this opportunity. We hope and pray that out of this meeting good things should come. Thank you. I would like to hand over to Archbishop Bill Burnett.

Archbishop Burnett:

Thank you Mr Prime Minister for your generous welcome and the Christian context in which you placed this meeting. I am not going to speak very long but I have been asked to say something which is simply in the nature of an introductory word but which we believe is ultimately the important issue facing us - the

two groups, Church and State. It is an area where it seems to us that in an inevitable way the interests and the concern of the Church and state co-mingle, where it is very difficult to divide areas where both have responsibility.

This is not something that can be adequately handled at this meeting but we believe it is necessary to allude to it if we are to be realistic about the situation in which we all find ourselves. It is said moreover in the understanding that the situation which has been created in our land cannot be altered in a day. There can, however, be no peace without essential change in our land. All of us around this table would probably accept that.

We welcome therefore that there are the beginnings of initiatives on the part of your Government, Sir. At the same time it is our view that while the philosophy and the practice of apartheid remains as Government policy the Church courts will have no alternative but to continue to say that we do not accept it as the basis of our common life and they will do so for theological and pastoral reasons and also for reasons of compassion. They must therefore oppose legislation that is based on it. While apartheid is basic to our way of life we believe that unrest taking various forms will continue on account of the indignities with which this has come to be associated.

The Cilliers Commission, following on the 1976-77 riots found that Government policy itself was a major reason for that outbreak. It is probably true that most of us who share more intimately in the fellowship with black people which is given to us in Jesus who is our Lord are enabled to feel and I emphasise feel more acutely some of their pains and I dare say some of their anger. Sometimes that anger is vented upon us who have white faces in the Church. It is patently difficult for us whites to enter in the black experience in our imaginations and in our emotions but the fact is that most black people know that the apartheid experience is something that is forced upon them against their will and does violence to their humanity. That is not a situation that can breed peace.

It is not necessary therefore to assume that the South African Council of Churches or its member Churches are the creatures of certain political forces of a revolutionary nature. For decades they have been saying "no" to apartheid without being heard. They must on good biblical precedence continue to say so whether men hear or whether they forbear.

When we speak against what we conceive to be injustice, as shepherds of Christ's flock, we try to do so from an ethical point of view. We are also liable to failure sometimes. Sometimes we have mixed motives. We ought to confess that we are like all humanity sinful, but we intend to do these things from an ethical point of view for pastoral reasons and also to warn against the dire consequences for us all. We do have this responsibility before God.

But people who disagree on certain issues as we do and who never meet may soon not only misunderstand and distrust each other but also hate one another even, alas, if they are Christians.

If I can interpose with a very personal observation. Until eight years ago, I am bound to say, I hated the Government. That was sinful. I want to say that I have been delivered of that

because partly I had met members of the Government but primarily because the Lord took a hand in that for me. I just wanted to say that as a matter of testimony and I am thankful to God for having me liberated of an imprisonment that was sinful. God is good. I was so moved to hear the Prime Minister say that he did not see this as the last of our meetings. I believe it would be for the healing of both Church and State if there could be reasonably regular meetings between Government and Church leaders at least during times of stress. This could be immensely important if we are able to resist the temptation of scoring off one another, or of playing to the gallery. That is what so easily happens.

After all, we can only meet as Christians if we do so as sinners. There is a solidarity in sin, and a solidarity in grace, in being redeemed in Jesus Christ. Sinners have no righteousness of their own to boast about. So it is absurd to attempt somehow to score points off each other with our own particular brand of righteousness, and it is equally absurd to play to the gallery with what we conceive to be our virtues.

And finally, the Scriptures make clear on what basis we meet and on what basis our society should rest. I would just like to quote one passage that is not usually quoted in this context. It is from 2 Corinthians 5 vs 16 and following: "So from now on we regard no one from a human point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way we do so no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come. All this is from God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ".

Much of what I have been saying really rests on that kind of experience of God which you share with us. I like to quote an incident of a father whose two young sons had a fight. One was seven or eight the other was four. The young one came to his father in a great state and said, "Johnny says he is no longer my brother and I am no longer his brother". And he wept greatly. The father said to him, "who is Johnny's father". He said, "you are". He said to him, "who is your father". He said, "you are". "Now nobody can say to you ever again that you are not Johnny's brother".

It is out of this really that we have to speak as Church into the situation in which we live, seeking to be effectively sons of one father in Jesus Christ. But it seems important that we should raise what I believe is the fundamental issue between us right at the start, and my hope is that Bishop Tutu will follow with something more specific in terms of issue.

Bishop Tutu:

Thank you very much, Mr Prime Minister. I, too, wish to express the depth of my gratitude in your agreement to meet with us and I want to reiterate what I mentioned in my letter to you, Sir, that this meeting is a meeting which is surrounded by the prayers of many Christians both in South Africa and in other parts of the world and we have come in the same spirit of Christian and brotherly love.

We are moved by a deep and passionate love for our land. We are

moved by a true patriotism. As I said in the speech which you have quoted, Sir, we certainly have no political axes to grind and I think that that should be underlined. The same gospel of Jesus Christ which compels us to reject apartheid, as the Archbishop has pointed out, whatever else it may be called, as totally unChristian, is the very selfsame gospel that constrains us to work for justice, for peace and for reconciliation. God has given us a mandate to be ministers, as well, of His reconciliation.

We thank God that you and your government have come to recognise that the destiny of the peoples of South Africa cannot be decided by one group alone. We want to urge you, Sir, yet again, to do what I think you have recognised, to negotiate for orderly change by calling a National Convention where our common future can be mapped out by the acknowledged leaders of every section of our South African population. To this end we believe fervently that the political leaders in goal, in detention, in exile must be permitted to attend such a convention. After all, your predecessor, Mr Vorster counselled Mr. Ian Smith to release black political leaders and sit around a conference table with them to try and hammer out a solution for their country.

It was your government which tried out a scheme similar to this in the Turnhalle talks relating to Namibia. Why should this way of dealing with apparently intractable problems be one that is for export only. We want to stress that the churches made this call for a National Convention long before it became official PFP policy. I, myself, made such a call to Mr. Vorster in my letter to him before the outbreak of the Soweto uprising in 1976.

We believe that there can be no real peace, Sir, in our beloved land until there is fundamental change. General Malan has said that the crisis in South Africa is 20% military and 80% political. You yourself have very courageously declared that whites must be ready to adapt or die. This adapting, or change has to go to the heart of the matter, to the dismantling of apartheid and not dealing with what many consider peripheral matters where we seem to be working only for an improvement in the situation rather than changing it fundamentally.

Please believe us when we say that there is much goodwill left, although we have to add that time and patience are running out. Hatred, bitterness and anger are growing and unless something is done to demonstrate your intentions and those of your government to bring about fundamental change leading to political power sharing then we are afraid that the so-called gasty alternative will be upon us. We recognise, Sir, that this kind of fundamental change cannot happen overnight and so we suggest that only four things need to be done to give real hope that this change is going to happen. We can assure you that if we go along this route you Sir will gain most of South Africa and the world while losing some of your party dissidents.

One, please let the Government commit themselves to a common citizenship for all South Africans in an undivided South Africa.

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If this does not happen then I am frightened, we are frightened that we will have to say that we will have to kiss goodbye to peaceful change.

Two, please abolish the Pass Laws. Nothing is more hateful in a hateful system for blacks than these laws. Yes, let it be a phased process because none of us want to have a chaotic country, so that we can avoid the chaos. But, Sir, I wish God could give me the words that could describe the dramatic change that would occur in relationships in this country if this second item be abolition, and the real abolition of the Pass Laws were to happen.

Third, please stop immediately all population removals and the uprooting of people. It is in my view totally evil and has caused untold misery.

Fourthly, please set up a uniform educational system. We are glad to note, Sir that you have agreed to the calling up of a commission to look into this matter. We want to suggest that in relation to this that all universities be declared open, and in the black universities to appoint blacks who have credibility in the black community. Otherwise we fear that the unrest in these institutions will remain endemic.

These are the four points. If these four things were done as starters we would be the first to declare out loud - please give the Government a chance, they seem in our view now to have embarked on the course of real change. I certainly would be one of the first to shout this out from the roof tops. Then, in that process, we would all have real security. Not a security that depends on force for its upholding. That a wonderful country we can have when we all, black and white, will walk with our heads high to this glorious future together black and white. Because we will have a non-racial society, a just society where everyone, black and white, will count because each black and white is a child of God as we all believe, created in His image. And you Sir, will go down in history as a truly great man.

If this does not happen, now, urgently I fear that we will have to say we have had it. But God is good and God loves all of us and God has filled this country with His Holy Spirit. Let us be open to that Holy Spirit and share our fears and anxieties. Thank you.

Rev Peter Storey:

Mr Prime Minister, I would like to speak in support to what Bishop Tutu has just said. I speak as one who works very closely with him, also because I am a white South African sharing in the ministry which he has in the Council of Churches.

I can't to say, Sir, that at no point is it the task of the Church to try to do the job of the Government. But there is a point at which our concerns must intercept, and that is that ultimately we are concerned with people whom God has loved so much that He has given His Son to die for them. Ultimately every policy of any Government is translated into laws which finally affect the lives of individual people. It is at that point that we believe on biblical grounds it is the task of the Church to say "yes, that is good" and to say "no, that is bad". To speak very clearly on those issues as they affect God's children.

I think the thing that I would want to share most passionately with you, Sir, is this that in the twenty years of my ministry amongst both black and white I have watched the black people of this land progressively lose faith in their white brothers and sisters and also to begin more deeply to question the Christian faith which white people brought to this country. I have seen bitterness and frustration develop to a level which now frightens me. I have seen hatred beginning to take its place amongst people whom I have always discovered to have the deepest goodwill. Why I believe we are at a point of crisis is because increasingly I hear from people whom I respect in the black community that there is no hope because no real change will come from these people. Somehow when it has finally emerged it has not changed the basic equation at all. And I am reminded of what a great South African author said that he fears very much that by the time we get around to loving they will have got around to hating. I believe, Sir, that that is the kind of point that we are at in our land.

Now we are not politicians, but I would want to submit very respectfully, Sir, that our day does not call for politicians. It calls for something greater from all of us than politics. It calls for statemanship. That is what, I believe what God is calling you to, Sir, and your Cabinet; to be more than politicians but statesmen.

As I look at the Bible I find that real statemanship, time and again has been demonstrated when there has been a willingness on the part of somebody who has the power to do something about it to change direction. When I look at the Bible I see that nothing can happen unless there is repentance. When I look at the word repentance, I find that fundamentally it means a change in direction. Not just a feeling but a change in direction, a willingness to go another way. I believe that in our land all of us need to repent of our history because in all of our history there are things which we would rather have not happened. Somehow that repentance must be demonstrated in a change of direction.

Now I come to the four points raised by Bishop Tutu. I would want to say, very simply Sir, that from some points of view they may appear to be quite radical but I am convinced, as he is, that we have reached the point where, unless those things can happen, and can happen genuinely and fairly quickly I am not sure that we can hold the good faith of the majority of the people of South Africa. I am sure that something like that is desperately needed in order to convince them that there is a group of people in control of affairs who genuinely and deeply wish to share this land with all their fellows.

I have seen the affect particularly of the citizenship issue on people. I have tried to put myself in the shoes of somebody who has a baby and goes to register that baby and is told in an office that that baby is not a South African. I just feel the violence of that in my heart. I could not cope with that kind of thing and then I have seen the anger and the hurt of people who have experienced that and said, but this is my land and you are taking it away from me.

I could go on, Sir but I believe that Bishop Tutu has spelled these things out. I only wish to say that as someone who is part of the white community and yet somehow is able to hear what is happening in the black community and is exposed to it, sometimes in a very aggressive way, that these are the points where a start must be made.

I want to say one final thing Sir, and that is that over the thirty years in which this country has followed a road of separation, I believe against the will of God, there is one group who have held together. That has been the Christian Church, or a large part of the Christian Church. I would want to suggest Sir that although we are not politicians, we are not experts in affairs of State, we have one thing to offer at this time of crisis and that is an experience of living and working together whites and blacks and brown which perhaps is unique, and out of that experience we may be able to offer, in goodwill, some of the lessons we have learnt of what it means to live that way, because I believe that is the way we have to live in the future, Sir. Thank you.

Rev John Ulster:

I would like to say very strongly that the Church and State need each other at this time and our presence here must be a sign of our willingness to unite this South African nation. We need to pray for you as we do Sir and for your Cabinet, and I think you need us to build stable communities, as we are willing to do Sir.

You know, yourself, that there is also criticism against this very consultation and that there are people within the Church who are opposed to this consultation. We have, however, decided, after prayer and seeking our conscience that it is right for us, that it is our duty to God, it is our duty to our country to whom we have a common loyalty. I would like to plead your consideration for six issues. We have more, these could be the Agenda for the next meeting which you have promised us, Sir.

The first one is sites for Church and welfare services. I am here referring to especially new developing areas. It has come to our notice and I am now speaking mainly from Cape experience that in the past the Churches were afforded sites for Church buildings at nominal rates. We paid R2,00, or little more, very reasonably for a site for example in Mitchell's Plain and when I applied last month for a site in Atlantis we were told by the Cape Divisional Council that the Department of Community Development is now embarking on a new policy by which we must pay for this per square metre. This is a change of emphasis and I think a change in the partnership to which the Churches and the Welfare Societies and the State has been in before. It has also come to our notice that in black areas there have been conditions for lease for sites for church and welfare services which have certain conditions, Sir which many do not find acceptable.

If I may quote one paragraph from the lease conditions which hurts us it is paragraph 14 of the agreement between the State and the Church authorities:

"When, in the opinion of the Minister of Co-operation and Development, the lessee uses the site or allows

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or suffers to be used for purposes other than those for which it was granted, or where the activities of the lessee or any of his or her representatives whether on the site or elsewhere are such as to encourage or tend to encourage deterioration in the relationship between blacks and the Government or governmental persons or bodies or the lessor or are aimed at defiance or breaches of the law the lessor, shall notwithstanding the provisions of Clause 1 give the lessee notice in writing that this lease shall on the expiration of twelve months be deemed to be cancelled"

Now Sir, our contention is that this description of discussing matters which may form a difference of opinion is too wide. We can foresee Sir that people would, our students for instance would study forms of Government, democracy or whatever, and find, here we have something to compare, and somebody may interpret that as being in criticism of the State or a person. The young people may therefore say this is not a place where we can, in a Christian atmosphere, discuss this kind of thing. We would plead Sir that consideration be given to a new formulation which will not make this distinction on the use of Church buildings and Church Halls, etc.

So, Sir, we plead that we reconsider the matter of a nominal price for Church sites and reconsider the phraseology of this particular clause so that we can be seen as partners in community development.

The second issue, Sir, is the matter of passports. Members of the South African Council of Churches have been alarmed at the number of clergy and other Church workers whose passports have been withdrawn, including our General Secretary, Bishop Tutu and the vice-President, Mrs Sally Motlana and others. We feel that the affect of this, Sir is manifold, but I would like to enumerate five points:

- a The ties of unity with the Church in South Africa and Christians overseas is thereby severely hampered and we feel that the crossflow of visitors and correspondents is a sign of our unity in Christ which we must not allow to be broken.
- b It also means that the leaders we have chosen are not able to perform the tasks that we have assigned to them because they cannot travel.
- c Those who hold passports are ridiculed by people outside this country saying, "you hold a passport because you must obviously be a supporter of the State". These things are said and we would like to convey to you that our own credibility, as we travel overseas is thereby questioned.
- d The impression is given that in this country there is no democracy, no right to disagree, and that in itself is harmful for the Church and it is harmful for the State.
- e It is said that in our system of Government the State actually pays the Opposition to criticise the State and at a very high salary, but when blacks criticise, their passports are withdrawn. I am not going into the validity of that argument but it is said and I think we should take note of it.

We know that there is a difference of opinion on passports.

In some countries a passport is considered as a right of a citizen. Many claim that in this country it is a privilege that belongs to the State. Again, I do not want to argue that point but I just want to say that people who criticise the Government also have positive things to say. You have heard it this morning Sir, and I think that while we sometimes differ on some things there are positive things that we can say. Taking the passport away also takes away an ambassador for South Africa.

The third issue, related to that is the matter of visas for people from outside who would like to visit us. I think that withholding a visa from a Church official from outside can also be a criticism on our own integrity as if we could believe everything that they would say. We would plead Sir that we could be allowed to hear them and make up our own minds whether we believe what they are saying when they criticise, or not. We feel that the withholding of visas to Church leaders outside is harmful for South Africa as it is harmful for our community.

The fourth matter, Sir, is also a matter of a practical nature though it may be considered contentious by some. That is the Church's view on the assistance to the needy. Our work of compassion. I would like to touch on three areas.

The first is our relief work. Secondly, our development work. Thirdly, the defence of those on trial which we consider as part of our work of compassion.

Our motivation in compassion is that nobody can deny the Church, either as a single denomination or jointly as we function, the compassionate function it has. In our division of Inter-Church Aid in the SA Council of Churches we spend vast sums of money in resettlement areas and on other home based to feed needy, and to give blankets, etc and we would like to see this, as our attention to the needs of people.

We also care for families of political prisoners, as you well know, and we feel it is our duty to attend to them as they do not get the allowances paid to other people in need from the State. Again, I am not arguing the reasons why I am just saying: there is a need.

We could say, from a theological base, that as in the case of the good Samaritan where the victim was attacked, it could be argued did the State not provide sufficient protection, etc. The good Samaritan saw that there was a case where his help was needed. That is the way we view this. We could plead, Sir, that you would consider this in this light.

It is not subversive. It is not considered to be anti-State, but as a sign of our compassion to them.

We could ask that you do not doubt our sincerity and our motivation as we say, we feel this is Christ's command to us to assist where necessary.

The fifth point is the matter of detention without trial. We see the removal of spokesmen, including young people with leadership potential as a shying away from responsibility. Their God given potential as leaders is sometimes hampered by detention without trial. We know, Sir, that this is also being practised outside -

I am saying that we need not follow everything that is done outside, we can make up our own minds. The fear that we have Sir is that while the leaders, and we have seen this also in the student unrest, who are shown to be leaders by the students, when they can no more exercise their democratic right to utter the will of the students, they shy away, and we feel that there is a danger that they will become communist and adherents of other parties. This is a great and serious danger.

We are not saying that we want to encourage crime or subversive elements. We are merely saying that we must leave open the democratic way of handling leaders. When people have done wrong we must take them to court and charge them. We will be there to say when you have done wrong you must take the consequences.

At this stage, Sir, I would like to thank those in authority who have released many of these students. I can testify that in the Western Cape the release of these students who have been detained has greatly eased the tension. It is still there, as you are well aware, and we are grateful that this has been done.

The last, and sixth point, which I would like to raise is the matter of discrimination against marriage officers.

Again we find ourselves at your end of the table, Sir, that both the Church and the State have committed ourselves to the elimination of discrimination. Ons ondervind egter, Meneer die Eerste Minister wanneer daar swart en kleurling huweliksbevestigings aangestel word, hulle beperk word tot 'n sekere gebied. Ek, byvoorbeeld, het net die reg gekry om die huweliksbevestiging net in die Kaapprovinsie te doen. My wit broeders, wat ook in my eie Kerk aangestel word, het die reg gekry om dit in die hele Republiek te doen.

Again, Sir, I think that is something that can be changed. My brethren from the black areas feel it even more when they are confined to a certain area and we feel that it is a restriction on our service and our ordination which we have undergone to serve all the people of God.

Therefore Sir I could only lastly say while we are grateful for this opportunity, we look forward to another occasion when perhaps other matters could be raised and dealt with. Thank you very much.

Ds S Boti:

Once more, thank you Mr Prime Minister for having allowed us to make our presentation.

Minister Schlebusch:

It seems to me that only the Rev Ulster has so far raised matters that I have to answer.

The first is the third point that he made, namely passports. I do not want to be personal, Mr Prime Minister, I am not going to mention any name. The Rev Ulster said that in some countries a passport is a right and here it is a privilege. I am very sorry. It might be ignorance on my part, Mr Prime Minister and I ask forgiveness, but I know of no civilised

country where a passport is a right and not a privilege. I must state that emphatically and if I am wrong I stand to be corrected at the next meeting, and I will apologise.

Now as far as the issue of passports is concerned, most certainly, as far as this Government is concerned, it considers a passport to be a privilege and I don't want to be personal, Mr Prime Minister, and it is an established custom that if I do withdraw a passport or refuse to issue a new passport I don't give my reasons, I definitely don't give reasons publicly but I must state it quite emphatically that if I have proof that if a citizen or an inhabitant of the Republic of South Africa pleads disinvestment overseas I will withdraw his passport. I am very emphatic about it, and I won't give way on that principle.

The same applies to persons, and I am only an agent of the Government in the last instance as far as that is concerned, security people usually bring proof of that to me when a person misuses this privilege by pleading violence overseas I withdraw his passport, unless very good reasons are given to the contrary. So I am sorry as far as that is concerned, Mr Prime Minister, I can't be repentant and I can't hold out any promise of doing otherwise in the future.

But, Mr Prime Minister I make bold to say, as far as passports and visas are concerned, that while I have been the Minister of the Interior I have given sufficient proof that I approached this very sensitive matter, and I agree that it is very sensitive, with a great amount of compassion. As far as visas are concerned, Mr Prime Minister, I have been on the receiving end myself. I was refused a visa for Norway, a very sophisticated country, a few weeks ago. I did not shed crocodile tears about it. I accepted it as the good right of that country, and that was the end of it. I never squealed about it in any way whatsoever. As far as visas are concerned, I was criticised in Parliament a few weeks ago for being too liberal in the issuing of visas. I have most certainly, Mr Prime Minister, defused that situation to a very large extent and I have most certainly, may I quote specific examples, made the policy more liberal by granting visas, for example, to American Negro journalists who are very critical of the Government. I don't know of any civilised Government in the world who would grant visas to persons whose only motive is to come to South Africa and to make vicious attacks on the Government and certain population groups in this country.

So I submit that as far as that is concerned, also I have defused the position to a very large extent and I am trying my best to be reasonable. What is more, at all times I have an open door for people to come back to me to ask me to reconsider my attitudes that I have adopted and in many instances after reconsideration I have granted a release.

As far as the matter of discrimination against marriage officers is concerned, I must be quite honest with you, Mr Prime Minister - I did not know that that existed. I do not want to commit myself at this stage, but it seems to me prima facie, the Rev Ulster has a point there. I will go into the matter and either write to him or to the Secretary of the South African Council of Churches about it or I will give him a reply on that matter when we meet again. I will most certainly go into that.