



The State President

18 March 1988

Private Bag 9080

Cape Town

8000

Dear Mr. Botha:

I write to you in my capacity as General Secretary of the SACC, and on behalf of the church leaders of the SACC. The attack you made on Archbishop Tutu with regard to the petition presented to you dated the 29th February with his covering letter dated 1 March, and the peaceful march of the church leaders on the 29th February in Cape Town is of great concern to us.

Archbishop Tutu was one of a large group of church leaders and the clergy who marched. A petition was drawn up and signed by 25 church leaders. We therefore are concerned that you have singled out the Archbishop for your allegations and wish to reiterate that the march of witness and protest and the petition presented to you are actions that were taken by many and endorsed by an even greater number of church people here and abroad.

The reason for these actions, both of which were peaceful, were to witness and protest.

(a) to witness to the vast majority of the people in this country, who are in our parishes, that we the church leaders, cannot accept the ungodly acts of oppression of this government. Thus, a public act, in the form of a march, was a public witness to our constituency. Talks behind closed doors with government leaders have not achieved anything. Church leaders have often come away humiliated and the people they represent are not able to witness these discussions. The lack of success of such

meeting have led many church leaders to believe that such attempts at change are hopeless, especially where those in power are determined at all costs to maintain white domination and apartheid.

(b) The protest was aimed at the government in a non-violent peaceful manner. Our protest was against the evils of apartheid which we observe and experience in South Africa as part of the "evil in the world." Thus we proclaim to our people, in the context of a day to day oppression and dehumanisation of apartheid, now intensified through the effective bannings of organisations and individuals, that "victory against evil in this world is guaranteed by our Lord." We are bound to proclaim the gospel in the context of our experience of injustice and oppression in South Africa under the apartheid government. I would like to let you know that the majority of members of our churches have never experienced oppression and brutal suppression of their political expression from us by Marxist, the ANC or the SACP, but under your government. We stand and will be against totalitarianism or any kind, irrespective of who is involved and whatever ideological position they hold.

You asked Archbishop Tutu whether his view of evil includes the struggle on behalf of Christianity, the Christian faith, and freedom of faith and worship, against the forces of godlessness and Marxism. In our understanding and experience of the struggle for the Christian faith and freedom of faith and worship in this land, we have to struggle against the forces of godlessness and apartheid, for it is the apartheid government that interrupts church services and seeks to control funeral services, all of which are part of the duties and life of the church.

You asked in your letter whether it is not true that the Christian church knows no other power than life and faith, and no other message than the true message of Christ. We say that our mes-

sage is exactly that: we proclaim the message of God's love for the oppressed in this land and our message to them is the message of God:

"Have nothing to do with the fruitful deeds of darkness but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention that the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes. We have expressed ourselves forcefully in this letter - everything visible." (Eph 5:11-13).

We understand our activities to be based on the gospel and that our mandate is from God. Our prophetic mission is that of God's i.e. to preach the good news of freedom to the poor and oppressed.

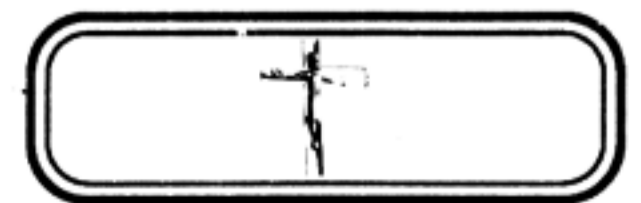
It was this tradition which the prophets of Israel took up when they protested against the abused of power by the kings. Jesus also identified himself with the poor and the downtrodden.

We feel that this unprecedented attack on the clergy may be paving the way for a state clampdown on the church and its witness to the truth. The church throughout the ages has borne the brunt of such attacks while the government have come and gone. We therefore, pledge ourselves to the gospel of Christ against the forces of evil of this country in of a new order of peace and justice for all irrespective of the consequences.

To quote the church leaders statement "if the state wants to act against the church of God in this country for proclaiming the gospel then so be it."

Yours sincerely,

FRANK CHIKANE (THE REV)
General Secretary
South African Council of
Churches





The General Secretary

**South African Council
of Churches
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Dear Rev. Chikane:

I hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter of 18 March 1988, which I read with a certain measure of alarm and concern.

I am surprised at your reaction concerning my letter to Archbishop Tutu, which was a reply to the petition as well as to a letter he sent to me when he forwarded the petition to me. In your letter you referred to an attack I was supposed to have made "on Archbishop Tutu, with regard to the petition, his covering letter, and the march of the church leaders," while you also asserted that I "singled out the Archbishop."

Firstly, the only reason why I wrote to Archbishop Tutu was because he wrote to me, because he was asked to do so by those who marched with him. It is as simple as that. I trust that your replying on his behalf does not signify a motion of no-confidence in the Archbishop's handling of the matter, but I did note the fact that the SACC apparently no longer believes that the Archbishop can act and speak on its (sic) behalf.

Secondly, I did not single out the Archbishop by receiving him in Tuynhuys - I handed the letter to him at a meeting which took place at his specific request. He asked for the meeting!

Thirdly, if you read my letter properly, you will also find that I did not single out the Archbishop in that either. On the contrary, I specifically addressed "you and the others who were with you on

that day;" those who support this petition; "those who co-signed the petition" "your individual capacities as members." Your allegation is therefore devoid of all truth. In view of this, and of the general drift of your letter, I wish to address you frankly.

I grew up in environment where the Lord was served, where the love of God, His Church and His word was transferred to me, and which I cherish in my heart to this very day. That is why I strive to conduct my personal life, and my services as State President according to the principles of the Christian faith.

thousands of citizens from neighbouring countries flee across our borders to seek food, work, health services and safety in our country which you so miserably misrepresent?

I have gone out of my way to invite leaders of Black communities, and also religious leaders, to co-operate with me in pursuing a just, peaceful and prosperous future for all in South Africa and our region. Many of them already do so.

It is therefore disturbing that you and others, who claim to represent the Church of Christ and the word of God, act in the irrespon-



This Government has in the light of the message of the Bible, gone out of its way to serve the people of this country, to broaden democracy, to remove hurtful and discriminatory legislation and social practices, and to provide for the needs of all on a scale that is found nowhere else on this continent.

The quality of life in South Africa compares favourably with the best in Africa. How do you explain the fact that hundreds of

sible way that you do.

You do not hesitate to spread malicious untruths about South Africa here and abroad. You should be fully aware of the numerous misleading statements concerning local support for sanctions and for the ANC, alleged atrocities by the security forces, the treatment of youths, and the fabrication of false testimony for especially the overseas



media.

You love and praise the ANC/SACP with its Marxist and atheistic ideology, landmines, bombs and necklaces perpetrating the most horrendous atrocities imaginable; and you embrace and participate in their call for violence, hatred, sanctions, insurrection and revolution.

In this regard you may recall Archbishop Tutu's statement during a lecture in St Paul's Cathedral in 1984 when he said:

"If the Russians were to come to South Africa today, then most blacks who reject communism as atheistic and materialistic would welcome them as saviours."

You may also recall the Archbishop saying that the aims of the SACC and the ANC are similar; and added in Atlanta, Georgia, in January, 1986 that:

"We hope one day to hear the leaders of the Western world say we side with the ANC which sought to change an unjust system peacefully, and were sent into the arms of the struggle because the West abandoned us."

The SACC, in its support of the Kairos Document, apparently regards communism as a myth, and in its acceptance of the Harare Declaration and the Lusaka Statement, expressed support for sanctions, disinvestment and boycotts against South Africa, and support for the Marxist terrorist movement.

It is alarming that God, and the Church of God which I also love and serve, can be abused and insulted in this manner; that individual members of the clergy who claim to be messengers of God, are in reality messengers of enmity and hatred while parading in the cloth, and hiding behind the structures of the Church; and instead of pursuing reformation, they are engaged in the deformation of religion, through the proclamation of false so-called 'liberation theology.'

At the same time responsible church leaders who proclaim the true gospel of Christ, lament the fact that they are at times intimidated into a conspiracy of silence

by those who have chosen the path.

The SACC claims to represent the Christians of South Africa. Yet you are aware that only about one percent of your income derives from this country - not even enough to pay your own salary and expenses, while all your activities are financed from abroad. Christians of South Africa are therefore justified to ask: just who do you really represent? I trust that you will admit that there are millions of Christians organised in a multitude of denominations in South Africa who are not members of the SACC, and who reject the road on which the SACC has embarked.

I have noted a frenzy of rumour and expectation regarding possible action by the Government against certain members of the clergy. I see no reason for this, unless they take part in subversive and revolutionary activities. But judging on this reaction in certain circles, it does seem as if some people want it to happen, or have reason to believe that it should happen.

I request you urgently not to abuse the freedom of religion and worship, and the goodwill of the people and the Government of South Africa for the pursuance of secular and revolutionary objectives. In the name of God and in the spirit of true Christianity I call upon you to be messengers of the true Christian religion, and not of Marxism and atheism.

Religious freedom is the cornerstone of proper human rights. It is well known fact that South Africa is a country which cherishes and safeguards freedom of religion. Even in the armed forces more than one hundred different denominations are actively engaged in the preaching of the Gospel.

In this regard it is ironic that you yourself challenged churches in South Africa to provide ministry to the terrorist movements, while at the same time withdrawing chaplains from the SADF!

I am amazed that you as theologian can compare me and the Government with immoral and godless people referred to in Ephesians 5:11-13, while ignoring

Ephesians 4:31:

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice;" and

also Ephesians 5:9: "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

In this spirit I call upon the cooperation of all churches and church leaders towards creating peace and goodwill among the peoples of our land, for the benefit of the Church of Christ.

In conclusion, I want to put a question to the SACC. We are both confessing that we are followers of Christ in spite of all our human weaknesses. Christ, as far as we know, openly took part in the spreading of the Gospel during the last three years of his life on earth. Can you quote one single instance from the Word of God in which it appears that Christ advocated violence against the State; or led a demonstration against the State; or broke a law of the State?

Yours sincerely,

P W BOTHA
STATE PRESIDENT

