



JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC) AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA (N.G.K.A.): LUSAKA, ZAMBIA FEBRUARY 19, 1988.

01. In accordance with the decisions of its General Synod, a delegation of the N.G.K.A. met with the ANC in Lusaka, Zambia on the 17th & 18th of February, 1988. The delegation of the N.G.K.A. was composed of the following:

Moderator Rev. Sam Buti Leader of the delegation and

Ds. MM Maphoto (Assessor)

Dr. NJ Smith (Actuaris)

The ANC delegation was made up of the following :

Mzwai Piliso: member of the National Executive Committee of

ANC (hereinafter NEC)

Ruth Mompoti (NEC)
Joe Nhlanhla (NEC)
Jacob Zuma (NEC)

Thabo Mbeki (NEC)
Rev. Fumie Gqiba

02. The delegation of the N.G.K.A. explained that the Commission for Justice, Reconciliation and Peace of their church has been charged with the task of meeting the ANC, among others with a view to assist in finding a way of stopping the continuing violence in South Africa by ending the apartheid system through negotiations. The church feels that it has a responsibility to act as a peacemaker to promote

justice, peace and reconciliation.

03. The ANC welcomed the initiative of the N.G.K.A. and expressed its appreciation of this first ever meeting between itself and the N.G.K.A. It reaffirmed its position that the source of violence in our country and region is the apartheid system and that to attain peace this system must be abolished in its entirety. It reiterated its commitment to continue the struggle until the objective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa is achieved.

04. The two delegations agreed that before any negotiations can take place, it is necessary that the Pretoria regime should create a climate conducive to such negotiations. The purpose of these negotiations should be the creation of a society in which apartheid is ended and a social order acceptable to all the people of South Africa put in its place.

05. The delegations agreed that the church, while not aligning itself to any political party, has to be true to itself and should therefore, in action, promote justice and peace in the world. To be faithful to its own nature, the church should voice a clear witness and initiate all neces-

sary actions towards the achievement of justice and peace in South Africa.

06. The delegations agreed that all people of goodwill had an urgent responsibility to take up such questions as the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners and detainees, saving the lives of the Sharpeville Six and others condemned to death in South Africa, and ending the tragic fratricidal strike in Pietermaritzburg and whenever else it may occur.

07. The delegation of the N.G.K.A. will report back to its own church as well as to other churches in South Africa, with a view to the promotion of all possible common action by all the people of South Africa, black and white, to bring about peace and rest to the people of our country.

08. The delegations agreed that the ANC and the N.G.K.A. should maintain contact and therefore arrange for further meetings in future.





THE NDOLA DECLARATION

CONFERENCE ON: "CHALLENGES ON THE FUTURE OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH IN CHURCH TODAY"

We, the delegates of the Southern African Youth Conference, coming from Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Burundi, Botswana, Sudan, Nigeria, Malawi, Lesotho, Ghana, Gambia, and Canada gathered from 1st to 7th May, 1988, in the Republic of Zambia, at the National Vocational Rehabilitation Centre-Ndola, with our theme: "Challenges on the Future of the African Youth in the Church Today," reflecting on the burning issues like: The Peace Challenge, The Development Challenge, The Theological Challenge and The Social Action Challenge, a result of a resolution for such a conference adopted at a meeting of the general secretaries of the East and Southern African Christian Councils in Gaborone, Botswana, in July 1987, and convicted by the call expressed in Isaiah 58: 6-10:

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen;
to loose the chains of injustice,
to untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free...
to share your food with the hungry. . .
to provide the poor wanderer with shelter
to clothe the naked.
..
If you do these, your night will become like the noonday.' Resolve the fol-

lowing:

1. We have noticed that in spite of its political independence, Africa's development is still hampered by economic dependence on capitalist Western Countries.

We therefore call upon the African youth to support the movement toward a new international economic order. We will respond to the sacred calling of God to engage in holy labour by supporting indigenous development projects like:

(i) buying locally manufactured goods and lending our support to Southern African Development and Coordination Committee (SADCC), Preferential Trade Area (PTA), and other like organisations.

(ii) starting self-help projects.

(iii) taking pride in our African Culture.

2. We call upon the Fundamentalist churches and organisations to develop a theology relevant to life and death reality in our suffering world.

3. We have noted that an important way of practising theology is not relevant to our situation. We therefore call upon the churches to develop a contextual theology from the grassroots which will also draw our sacred African culture.

4. In solidarity with the Ecumenical Decade of Women, we call upon our churches to support the ordi-

nation of women and to encourage them to fully participate in the leadership of the church.

5. We further pledge our solidarity in Southern Africa's fight against the imperialist exploitative support of the racist regime and the inhuman and barbaric regime of South Africa against the majority.

6. In view of the above we call for:

(i) The unconditional release of all the political prisoners and imprisoned children of South Africans and Namibians.

(ii) The unbanning of banned political organisations and the returned of exiles.

(iii) The immediate lifting of the imposed state of emergency.

(iv) The immediate withdrawal of South African troops from Angola and Namibia.

(v) A stop of South Africa's aggression and destabilisation policies on the Frontline States.

7. We call on:

(i) All Christian youth to commit themselves to pray and work for the downfall of the Pretoria regime and to give material support through the OAU liberation funds in their respective countries, to South Africa and Namibia in their fight for total liberation and for refu-



gee programme.

(ii) The UN to implement Resolution No. 435 on Namibia.

(iii) All the progressive youth and the liberation forces to come together to fight the oppressor regime since we believe in unity we stand and divided we fall.

8. We urge all peace loving nations of the world to support the economic sanctions on South Africa's apartheid regime in order to accelerate its downfall so as to avoid more bloodshed in South Africa and Namibia.

9. We call on all churches and youth organisations to promote conscientisation

programmes and to give material support to organisations or committees in charge of refugees from South Africa, Namibia, and other parts of Africa. Where there is no such refugees organisations or committee, we resolve to create one to care for such refugees.

10. We call upon the South African President P.W.Botha, to grant clemency to all patriots on death row, to forthwith stop all treason trials, and to stop the death sentence as a form of punishment.

11. To express our solidarity with the South Africans and Namibians in their struggle to topple the Pretoria regime, we resolve as soon as possible to:

(i) withdraw all funds

and interactions with Barclay's (First National) standard banks and other financial institutions with dealings in South Africa.

(ii) participate fully in and encourage cultural boycotts.

(iii) boycott all South African goods.

12. We resolve to form a continuous committee, to be based in Zimbabwe, out of the participants of this conference whose task will be to set up a network of youth and student organisations to facilitate information sharing and exchange programmes, to follow up in six month's time on the resolutions here recorded, and to plan for further conferences of this nature.

THE CHURCH/STATE CONFLICT

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

* On 24 February 1988, 17 organisations, including the UDF, DPSC, and other groups were effectively banned.

* The following week church leaders walked from St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town to parliament to present a petition protesting the bannings. Some church leaders were arrested (including Archbishop Tutu, Dr. Boesak, Archbishop Naidoo, Rev. Chikane, Rev. Mgojo).

* P.W. Botha, in response to this protest, wrote a letter to

* Archbishop Tutu asking him if he is 'serving the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of the SACP and ANC'.

* Bishop Tutu was supported in his stand of protest by the Anglican bishops of South Africa who said 'We question the right to define what is spiritual or decide what is valid Christian witness.'

* Rev. Chikane, general secretary of the SACC, wrote a letter to P.W. Botha in support of the church position of protest.

* P.W.Botha responded to Rev. Chikane accusing him of promoting hatred and revolution.

* Forty-five leading theologians from theological faculties and departments across the land came out in support of the church leaders and explained that 'the church has a clear Biblical basis for its protest and is in accord with the mainstream of Christian tradition in resisting injustice.'



* The Methodist Peace Church proposal was attacked on a SABC Network programme.

* The "New Nation," a newspaper published by the SACBC was closed down by the state. The Catholic bishops protested against this on the steps of the

Johannesburg Cathedral.

* The Church leaders have called an emergency convocation for 30th, 31st May 1988 to address the issue of Christian witness through non-violent effective action in these times.

BACKGROUND TO THE STATE POSITION

The government has embarked on a reform program in which people who are powerful at present implement what they see as necessary changes. The government says these changes must occur under conditions of stability and thus they cannot tolerate forces such as the ANC and the UDF - because they upset the stability of reform.

The government's present course of action is a response to the events of the 1970's: the Soweto uprisings of 1976, the independence of neighbouring countries and the development of opposition groups locally. In addition, after 1970 the economy was unable to develop consistently.

The strategic response of the

National Party was the new constitution of 1983. This constitution aimed to draw in Asians and 'Coloureds' to increase the stability of the government. It also laid the way for executive power to lie in the State President and appointed committees under the secretive National Security Management System

is greatly restricted. Many organisations have been effectively banned. South Africa has responded to the growth of international anti-apartheid actions by retreating into an increasingly aggressive and isolationist stance. It has pursued military intervention rather than diplomacy towards its neighbouring states.



The state and church conflict

BACKGROUND TO THE CHURCH POSITION

While the government's actions have served to widen the gap between black and white South Africans, many church denominations have begun to take seriously their responsibility to address the concerns and divisions in the community. The churches originally

rather than through the traditional parliamentary system. This style of government was designed to provide strong mechanisms for responding to any security threats. This is 'total strategy.'

The new constitution has been severely tested by the opposition that created; in particular, the rapid growth of the United Democratic Front and the growth of oppositional labour federations such as COSATU. On the white right, in opposition to the reform course, has been the growth of the Conservative Party. As a result, the government has had to intensify control and repression. The whole country is under a state of emergency. The press

arrived with the white settlers and were at first primarily pastors to this community. As a result most churches inherited racially divided practices. The apartheid of the 1950's with issues such as forced removals and the Bantu Education Act however, activated individuals and led to the issuing of anti-apartheid church statements. More recently some churches have been trying to change their structure to meet their new awareness of social needs. Where the mother-church (as was the case with the N G Kerk) was not prepared to fundamentally transform its approach to apartheid, its black mem-



bership consequently came into conflict. The majority of Christian churches have however, developed an openness to the needs of the country's black majority and the political organisation which represent them.

Through the SACC and SACBC have increasingly moved in a direction which makes conflict with the government more likely, some of the membership of these churches have not kept pace with their leadership. There are furthermore some churches which embrace the status quo. The government intends to use these divisions for its own ends, by promoting the conservative and right-wing church group. At the same time many of the church denominations critical of apartheid are moving toward the recognition that action and not simply words, are demanded by the gospel in situations such as ours. These developments in church and state make further conflicts likely.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Obeying The Law

State Position

The Church must obey the government and keep its law 'since all government comes from God.' (Romans 13:1)

Church Position

The church in fidelity to the whole gospel must obey 'God rather than men' (Acts 4) particularly when the people in question are responsible for practising a heresy like apartheid maintained by political repression.

LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOUR

The Group Areas Act and Separate Education create barriers between different racial groups. The government has structured people's lives such that loving your neighbour in practice means loving your own group.

The church teaches us to love everybody as our neighbour irrespective of their colour.

POLITICS

The Churches should not involve themselves in politics but should rather remain within the spiritual realm.

The churches believe sin should be opposed wherever it occurs, whether it be personal life, family life, at work, or in our social and political life.

PROTEST

The churches should refrain from engaging in protest actions since this falls outside their sphere of competence. Christians are obliged to act in witness to Christian values. In our present situation this includes acting to remove apartheid.

VIOLENCE

The government does not see itself as violent. Violence from the opposition is terrorist and immoral. The churches see that much of the government violence is immoral. On counter-violence some Christians would say that active non-violence is the churches' position, while others would support both a just war and non-violent action.

THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

The ANC is seen as a violent,

terrorist organisation which wants to subvert existing society and undermine the reform programme. The ANC wants to govern and is seen as an enemy.

The ANC is an African Nationalist political movement with widespread support. It represents the views of many South Africans. It cannot be excluded from a political solution to South Africa's problems.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE CHURCH/STATE CONFLICT

We should also reflect upon the present Church/State conflict in the light of the Bible. What appears immediately is that there is nothing new about a Church-State conflict. Throughout the Bible and the history of the Church there have been conflicts between those who held political power and those whose first loyalty was to God. Again and again we find the people of God accusing the political authorities of sin: injustice, exploitation, abuse of power, oppression and idolatry.

EXODUS

The conflict here was between Pharaoh and Moses, between the Egyptian state and the religiously-motivated Hebrew slaves. Pharaoh was an oppressor; 'The Egyptians ill-treated us, they gave us no peace and inflicted harsh slavery upon us' (Dt 26:6). God heard the cry of the Hebrew slaves and called Moses to free them from slav-



ery. This led to a conflict between Moses and Pharaoh. The reason for the conflict was clearly the hard-hearted sinfulness of Pharaoh.

THE PROPHETS

After the people of Israel had settled in the land of Canaan they called upon Samuel to 'appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations.' Samuel warned them that the king would become rich at their expense and that in time 'you shall become his slaves' (1 Sam 8:17). However, he gave in to the people and anointed Saul king. As time went on the Jewish kings became worse and worse until eventually the people found themselves cruelly oppressed by their own kings. Here it was the great prophets of the Old Testament who protested accusing the kings of injustice, exploitation, cruelty and idolatry. For generations these messengers of God were in conflict with the Jewish state. There were also false prophets who supported the status quo and told the kings what they wanted to hear, shouting 'peace, peace, when in fact there was no peace' (Jer 6:14).

JESUS

It has sometimes been said that Jesus was not in conflict with the State. This misunderstanding arises because it is assumed that the State or political authority was the Romans and the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, chief priest and elders were the re-

ligious authorities of that time. In fact Caesar was the external imperial power but the local, national government was in the hands of Herod and the Sanhedrin which included scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees. Jesus called Herod 'that fox' and he classed with all the various groups who were represented on the Sanhedrin. There was that time in Judea no clear distinction between religious authorities and civil authorities. In any case all the powers and authorities eventually conspired to destroy him in order to maintain the status quo. Jesus was in conflict with the authorities of his time for exactly the same reason as Moses and the prophets in their time:

because of the sinfulness of those in power. Jesus' whole life was a drama of conflict with evil in all forms. That is why he was crucified.

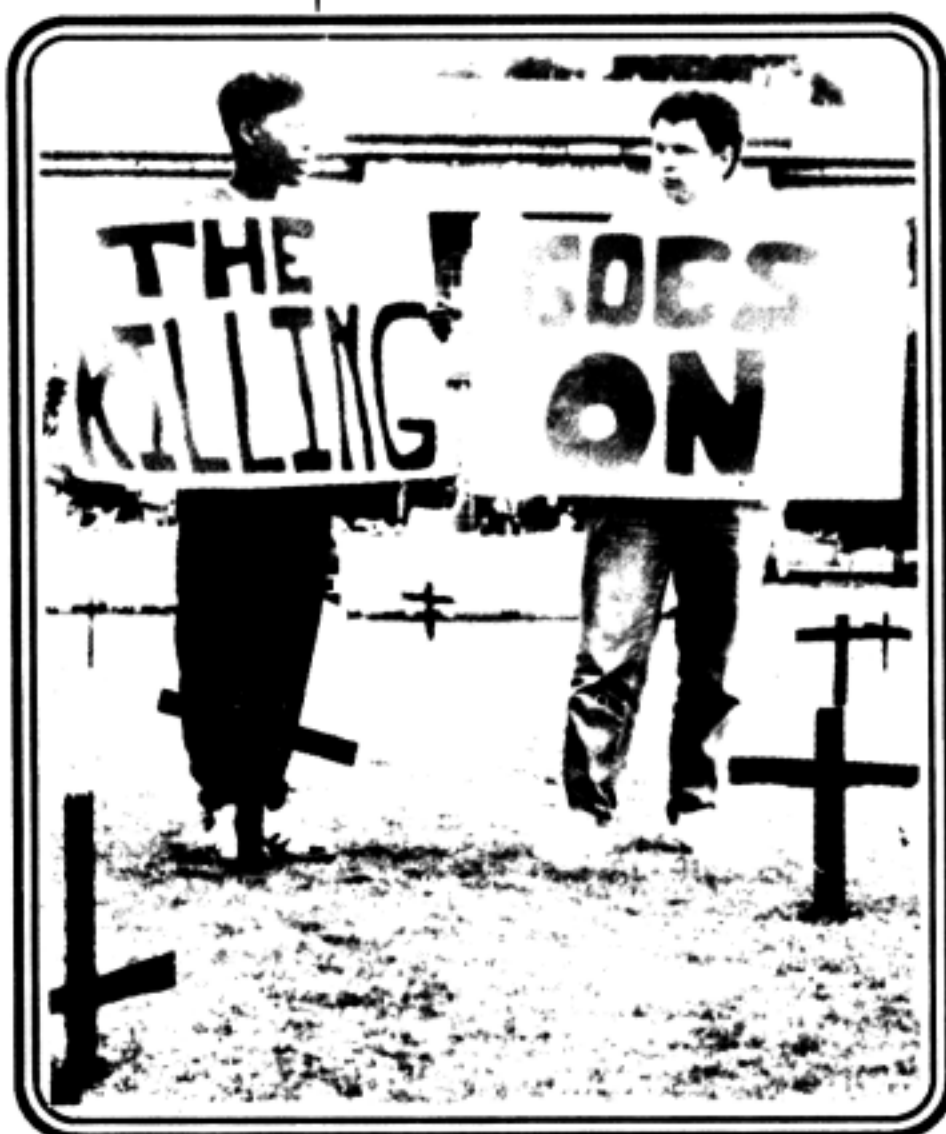
THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

From quite early on Christians found themselves in conflict with the Roman Empire. Off and on for the first three hundred years Christians were persecuted by various Roman Emperors who imprisoned them and threw them to the lions. The idolatrous sinfulness of the

State in these times of persecution was clearly the reason for the conflict.

CONSTANTINE

The Church-State conflict of the first three centuries ended abruptly in 312 when the Emperor Constantine removed all restrictions on Christians religion and eventually made it something like



the official state religion. This was the beginning of an association between Christianity and political power in which all too often the Church accepted material benefits and privileges in exchange for its loyalty and support. The prophetic tradition has nevertheless continued through the ages particularly in the saints and reformers who spoke out about the sins of those in power.

SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

