

APPENDIX CRESOLUTIONS OF THE EIGHTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, JULY 27 - 29, 1976

1. (a) The conference of the South African Council of Churches adopts the terms of the "Call to the Churches and Nations of Southern Africa" as they apply to South Africa and commits itself to prayer for this land and neighbouring territories with their leaders. (Bulletin 15 p.10)
- (b) We the delegates of the South African Council of Churches Annual Conference, 1976, note with deep concern the detention of Mr Thomas Manthata of the Division of Justice and Reconciliation who, on behalf of the Council was entrusted with the responsibility of working on liaison with various labour groups and making contact with the families of those who had been detained and Mr M Msoki of "Dependants" Conference who is the field worker assisting in the care of families of political prisoners. We, as the employer of these two men, commit ourselves to the same kind of Christian involvement when and wherever possible and challenge our fellow Christians to do the same. We call upon the Government to charge or release Messrs. Manthata and Msoki and other persons of similar commitment.
- (c) The National Conference of the SACC requests the member churches to participate with the Division of Justice and Reconciliation in the study of the "encounter between the Church and ideologies of social change" using materials from an international study project of that name as well as local resources (with a view to developing a constructive critique of our political and economic system).
- (d) This National Conference of the SACC is convinced by the Gospel that the prophetic word of the Church should be directed to herself in the first instance. This includes economic matters. We believe that also in the economic field the Church is called to be an exemplary society. THEREFORE we call upon the member Churches and Organisations to:
 - i) investigate whether the institutions in which they invest, perpetuate economic oppression in the Southern African situation by:
 - a) discriminatory wage practices;
 - b) preventing the introduction of proper machinery for collective bargaining;
 - c) practising discrimination in the promotion of staff;
 - d) making excessive profits by keeping black wages low.
 - ii) examine their own employment practices and salary scales. AND we ask the Division of Justice and Reconciliation to prepare guidelines on working for economic justice for distribution to member Churches and Organisations.
- (e) This conference re-affirms its previous decision that Churches be requested to include in the make-up of their delegation both youth and women representatives.
- (f) This conference requests the Executive Committee in consultation with its member churches to investigate the establishment of a Youth Desk to facilitate contact with the youth of the Churches.

/2. SOME TO DISTURBANCES'

2. SOWETO DISTURBANCES (Black Caucus Recommendations)

The National Conference of the SACC resolves as follows:

- i) We request the Executive Committee to investigate an effective means of fully informing the constituency of the events which transpired in Soweto and other areas during the recent disturbances which have been a direct challenge to the Church.
- ii) We express our condolences to all the bereaved families who lost their loved ones in the recent disturbances in the townships.
We urge the State to permit open public meetings again in order that:
 - a) parents can be informed of the result of delegations to the author ...
 - b) we urge churches to expose their constituency to the full implications of the disturbances through consultation with blacks.
- iii) We affirm the right of the students to have protested non-violently on the languages issue and express our solidarity with the black youth in the struggle for liberation.
- iv) We express our support for the officials of SASO, BPC and SASM who have recently been detained or arrested without any charges being laid against them. We do this in the awareness of these organisations being amongst the legitimate mouthpieces of the black people of South Africa.
- v) We call upon all those who have relatives missing as a result of those disturbances to contact their local ministers and similarly we ask the constituent churches to request their ministers to list missing parishioners in order to assist in tracing them. If difficulties are encountered an appeal can be made to the SACC for legal advice.
- vi) We call upon the authorities to charge or release all those who are detained.
- vii) We call upon the authorities to heed the demands of the community leaders for the withdrawal of the police reinforcements and patrols as they are a serious provocation of the people. We believe that, unless there is a marked improvement in the relationship between the police and the black people, further violence may occur.
- viii) We deplore the continuous reference to black youth as thugs and tsotsis as hurtful in the extreme to black people as this gives rise to misrepresentation of the facts of the situation and is seen as divisive.
- ix) We deplore the fact that the provision of recreational facilities in the Black townships has been financed from the profit on liquor sales. We note that the beer halls and bottle stores have long been identified with the exploitation and oppression of the black man. We therefore demand that the money which is being spent in re-erecting beer halls and bottle stores should instead be used for black education.

RESOLUTIONS ON DOCUMENT PRODUCED BY THE MIXED GROUP

- i) The National Conference refers to the Executive Committee the question of devising an act of public witness and penitence which will have an impact on the constituency as well as society such as the dramatic actions of the prophets of old.
- / ii) We call upon

- ii) We call upon the Churches to examine their own structures as sometimes being a hindrance to liberation and, at the same time, to critically examine existing and future legislation of Church and State by the yardstick of "Love God and Love your Neighbour as yourself".
- iii) Having noted the expression of fear on the part of Whites and the need for dealing with it we recommend that the Division of Justice and Reconciliation make this one of their concerns in collaboration with the established Justice and Reconciliation committees in the constituent churches and further request that they look in depth at methods of non-violent opposition to violence by bringing concrete recommendations to the next national conference.
- iv) We recommend that the other resolutions and/or recommendations made by that group as listed hereunder be referred to the Heads of Churches meeting with the request that they look at these matters seriously and, if necessary, convene a further meeting to facilitate action and implementation:
 - a) Approach to the Dutch Reformed Church to seek a united Christian appeal to the State in the matter of worsening race relationships.
 - b) Invigorating the Church to be the Church, the "zone" of our common life over which the Church HAS control; so that it can offer an "alternative society", in which, on national, regional and local levels, all aspects of apartheid will be eliminated. (Special attention is to be given to the training of ordinands, properties etc.)
 - c) Urge each denomination to expose itself to the WORD OF GOD.
 - d) Require individual action as essential ingredient of the whole programme (a possible "Call to the Individual Christian" follows):
 - e) TO BE ISSUED BY SACC TO INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS

We say to every Christian "Peel the arrogance from your heart, listen and learn, show your brotherhood in the streets, in the shops, on the farms and in your homes.

"Form groups across the barriers of your community to discover with others the needs of our country, the details of righteousness and the purpose of prayer".

We say as individuals to the angry and the suffering, "we are listening to you, and we suffer with you."

We have failed in many ways, but we rededicate ourselves to

learn together
work together
share together
suffer together

We reject the oppressive system of Apartheid and call for the liberation of the blackman, to us according him full citizenship in a common South Africa.

We express our deep concern about the recent violent developments in Namibia. Furthermore, we express our strong support with all those Christians and movements which are involved in the struggle for a free and just Namibia.

/MOTION ON INVESTMENT

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The delegates to the SACC National Conference request the SACC to undertake, in co-operation with its member churches and organisations, an urgent and careful study of the issue of investment and disinvestment in South Africa, in order to ascertain which of these two directions would open better opportunities for the development of the underprivileged sector of our population. The report on this matter to be presented to the next National Conference.