

You have given me a very important but difficult assignment, especially in view of the crisis in the life of the black community which has recently arisen in the area of education - a crisis which I believe will repeat itself in the future because the basic issues have neither been truly faced nor resolved.

1. The wide-ranging influence of Christianity in the history of our country.

There can be no doubt in anybody's mind about the crucial role which Christianity and the Christian church has played in the history of South Africa. This missionary effort was always initiated by whites, presenting a view of Christianity which was in almost every respect white and western. It was only after nearly 300 years of white missionary effort that this limited and one-sided view began to be replaced with another concept of the Christian faith.

2. South Africa as a Christian country. As a result of the belief of the Afrikaner people that they had a divine mission to proclaim the Gospel to the "heathen" nations of South Africa, the misleading conviction has grown in the minds of the majority of whites that this country is a Christian country with a Christian government applying Christian norms of ethics to the political, social and educational life of the community. White South Africa has created a view of itself as a Christian society upholding and defending traditional norms of Christian morality, all judged according to white, western standards. This claim to be a Christian nation with a Christian government was unfortunately not perceived to be theologically false, politically dangerous and morally untenable. The confusion created in the minds of millions of blacks in South Africa has been very real and serious, and has certainly been one of the reasons why many young blacks are increasingly rejecting the Christian church and even the Christian faith.

3. GENERAL ASSUMPTION

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