

THOUGHTS IN JAIL

The following letter was written by Pastor Zephania Kameeta, Principal of the Paulinum Theological College at Otjimbingwe.

Pastor Kameeta was recently detained under the South African "Terrorism Act", which permits indefinite detention in solitary confinement.

To all who by word and deed
stand by us in the struggle;
To all who by day and by night
bring our case before the Lord!

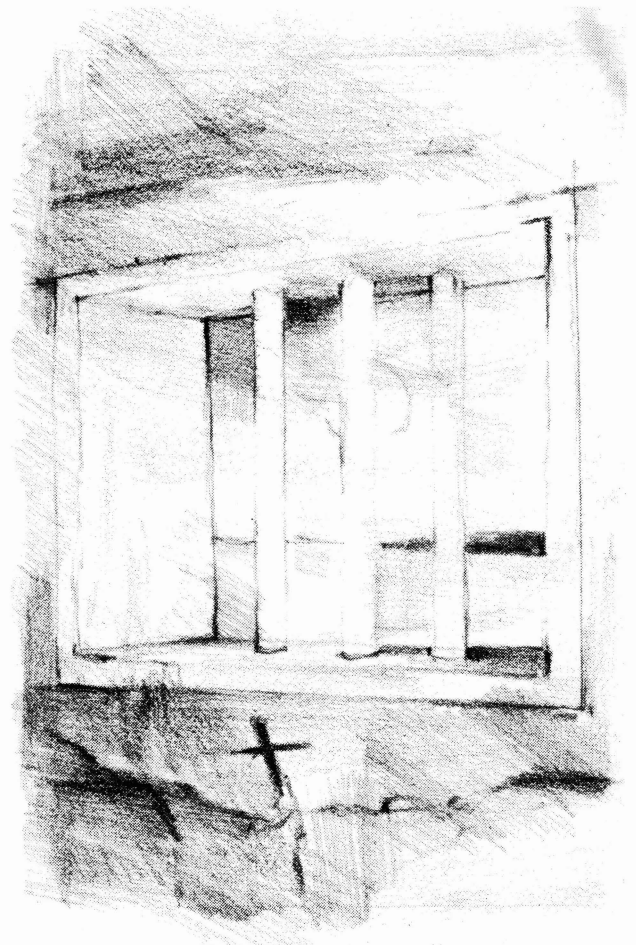
Dear brothers and sisters,

Right at the outset, I should like, on behalf of my wife and children and all Namibians, to thank you all most sincerely for your prayers and support during the past days and weeks. Once more it has become clear that the South African Government is not dealing with just "a small group of agitators and terrorists", but with thousands of Christians around the world, and with all who, irrespective of their faith or nationality, stand for what is right and just.

Through this letter I wish to let you share in some of the thoughts which I had while, like many others, I was locked up in solitary confinement. Many questions were roused in me, and I want to discuss these with you. Have these events not perhaps estranged me from my Saviour? Many people must have put this question to themselves and come to the conclusion, "These people are only interested in politics and are far removed from Jesus and his Church!" My purpose here is not to accuse anyone or defend myself, because I had to face these questions myself, be it in a different form. But I do wish to share with you what I lived through and experienced in jail.

I tried to look back on my life; and here I must say that I have honestly never lived so closely—day and night—with the Word of God as I did during the three weeks during which I was detained. I have always read the Word with an eye to other people. I always asked, "What does the Word of God say to 'them.?' " But in these three weeks I began to ask, "What does the Word of God say to me in this situation?" I not only studied his Word, I EXPERIENCED it! Every word and sentence took on a new meaning for me in those days. I felt very strongly that the Lord himself was speaking to me. I have no language or words in which I could describe what I experienced in those days with the Word of God. In this time Jesus still more became my Saviour.

There were days during which I experienced great doubt. Especially when I thought of his words, "Ask and you shall receive". Why does he then not free us, I asked myself. I thought of my wife and children, and I thought of the scores of wives and children and girlfriends of my fellow detainees. O Lord, how long? I asked accusingly and doubtingly. I argued aloud with the Lord in my cell: Lord if you are a God, then you must liberate Namibia now! In those days I expected that the Lord should act according to my will.



There were also moments when anxiety took over. My hands sweated fear. In such moments I did not want to open my Bible; and when I wanted to pray my mouth felt dry and I could find no words. This fear especially descended on me before the interrogations.

This unease was at times so great that I feared that something was happening to me. But then a great calmness came upon me. I was strongly aware of the many prayers going up to God. I took my Bible and from it drew endless reassurance. With new strength I called on the Lord in the words of the Psalmist

in God I trust without a fear.
What can flesh do to me? (56, 4 & 12)

The comfort and power which I got from these words is indescribable! I thought of my fellow prisoners and those outside full of worry. I brought them before the Lord. In this power I sat before my interrogator. The word of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel became a tangible reality to me:

Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves;
so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves . . .
When they deliver you up, do not be anxious
how you are to speak or what you are to say;
for what you are to say will be given to you
in that hour.
(Read Mt 10: 16–20)

And thus let me come to the next question: can the preachers not leave this struggle to the politicians?

The struggle in our land has not only to do with the liberation of Namibia, but it goes further and deeper than that. The presence of the South African Government is not just a political question, but it is a threat to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus I see it as the task of every Christian to work for the removal of this government. In this country which claims to be Christian, you can be a Christian ten thousand times over; but if you are not white you are treated like a dog. I know that at this moment much propaganda is being made abroad about the "new era which is dawning in Southern Africa." The Government of S.A. is doing everything in its power to blind the already blinded eyes of the Western World. In Windhoek this Government is committing the greatest political deceit of the Century. While they are busy removing the Apartheid signs from the buildings (but not from their hearts!) high officials are still fighting for the superiority and dictatorship of the so-called white man. They are convinced that the well-being and future of the whole world is in the hands of the white man. They are working to keep the white race "pure". The so-called "new era" which—according to the SA Government—is busy dawning, is based on the policy of Separate Development, which is nothing but a metaphor for racial discrimination.

In his Editorial in Pro Veritate of September 1975, Roelf Meyer discussed the motive behind this policy as follows:

The basic question which must be asked is, what is the motive behind the policy? Once again everyone will more or less agree that it is an attitude towards man in which the differences in background between different races and cultures are regarded as more important than what they have in common. Therefore the identity of people which exists in their race, culture, and language, must be protected. One group such as the Afrikaners should not be exposed to an open community, where such a unity between people of different backgrounds may come about to the detriment of their original identity, which may be diffused or even disappear. A further conviction behind the motivation is that other population groups can enjoy more rights and privileges so long as this does not threaten the right of other groups, for example such as the Afrikaners, to be themselves.

In support of this let me repeat what I once said: The South African Government and its supporters proclaim—especially by what they do—a message which is in diametrical opposition to the Gospel. While God tells us that in Jesus Christ he has broken down the wall of separation between himself and us, and between us and our fellowman; the South African Government proclaims and builds the wall of separation which brings about alienation, mistrust, prejudice, fear, hatred and enmity between man and man and therefore between man and God. This message stands in direct opposition to the Gospel of reconciliation, love, peace, brotherhood and justice. The different languages, races and cultures are gifts bestowed by God in his mercy, but become an abomination in the eyes of the Lord when they are used as building blocks in the wall which divides man from man, and do not lead to brotherhood, peace and reconciliation. And worse still is when Race, Language and Culture take the place of Yahweh. In Southern Africa this has already happened; as it is just these three Gods who decide where I should live, where I should sit, eat or

relax; whom I may love and whom I may marry or not marry; whose hospitality I may enjoy and whose I may not enjoy; where I must worship and even where I must be buried.

Therefore I see the struggle in Southern Africa, and especially here in Namibia, not merely as a political struggle, in which only politicians may participate, but it is a struggle in which all Christians are called to participate. And if this should happen a solution which involves armed struggle can be avoided, **because the Word of the Cross will be enough to tackle this task.** And here of course the already boring question of the Church and Politics must be raised.

I want to approach it shortly and simply. If the so-called politicians desire that the Church of Jesus Christ should not do or say anything in the political field, then they should also do nothing in the God-created world. If God is the creator of Heaven and Earth, and if he is the Father of Jesus Christ, and if Jesus Christ is the founder and Head of the Church, **why should the Church then be silent and do nothing in the face of racism, exploitation and violence, when these are committed in God's world?** Alternatively, should God withdraw from the history of this world, hand it over to the Devils, and restrict himself to the Temples and Church buildings?

On the other hand this is not at all surprising: when the pro-Government Churches proclaim a day of prayer for the "Constitutional Talks" this is not politics. But when the Churches—who reject the South African Government and its policy—intervene and speak for the thousands who are exploited, humiliated and trodden underfoot day and night, this is regarded as politics and subversion.

In past months and weeks, and in these days too, numerous people have been locked up in jail under the provisions of the so-called "Terrorism Act". Why does the South African Government seek in others for that which it is itself? Is this what the psychologists call projection? If anybody should be charged with terrorism then it is most surely the South African Government.

For instance let us look back at the events of the 24th of August. In the days preceding this day an appointed band went about in one part of the location and assaulted people. On Sunday the 24th of August the NNC called a public meeting with the aim of informing the public about these happenings, and to express their strongest condemnation of what was happening; furthermore the NNC wished to make known the steps which it would take. The speakers made their judgement and condemnation of these events known in clear language. And further they called on the public to remain calm.

The South African Police—as they always do— took up their positions with dogs, batons, firearms and pick-up vans . . . amongst people who stood there quite empty-handed. Immediately after the third speaker had finished his speech they attempted to disperse the crowd with violence. The speakers and other leaders who were present at the meeting were arrested under the "Terrorism Act". To save time I leave it over to your judgement.

Is it worth continuing with the struggle? Is there still hope? This is a very serious question for many—myself included. If the passage of world history was in the hands of mankind then I would say that we should rather fold our hands and wait until the world sinks or is saved. But it is exactly the fact of belief that history and the existence of the world is in the strong hands of God which makes it impossible for me to leap back and withdraw to “safety”. It was especially while I was in jail that this conviction became still stronger in me.

In answer to the above question, and as a conclusion to this

letter, I wish to greet you with a quotation from the book of the prophet Isaiah:

For the LORD is our judge,
the LORD is our ruler,
the LORD is our King,
he will save us.

Then be greeted in the name of our Master.

From your brother,
Zephania Kameeta □



DIVIDED WE STAND, ~~X~~

UNITED WE FALL

by Peter Rutsch

According to the 1970 Census the population of Edendale was given as 43 500 of which 37 000 were African. The estimate now is 55 000 of which 50 000 are African. In the Municipal area of Pietermaritzburg, the population at the 31st December 1975 was estimated to be:

Whites	47 150
Coloureds	11 022
Indians	42 900
Africans	45 105
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	146 177

Thus, officially, in the Pietermaritzburg/Edendale complex there are close to 200 000 people, living and working, eating and sleeping. What the unofficial figure is, is anyone's guess, but it is bound to be substantially more. Of the 200 000 only approximately 47 200 have the vote, in other words, have a say in how their daily affairs are organised. The other 152 800 have no real meaningful say in the government that rules their lives whether at local, provincial or state

level. Although Pietermaritzburg may consider itself go ahead and progressive in that it has members of the Indian and Coloured Local Affairs Committees sitting at City Council meetings, and on the various sub-committees, these people do not have a vote and are restricted in their contribution by procedural rules. They have no means whatsoever of protecting the interests of their constituents.

No right, without the means for protecting that right, is worth the paper it is written on; it can at best be seen only as a hand-out, akin to a 'yo-yo' which can be extended or withdrawn at the will of the person controlling it.

Those members of the City Council who initiated and supported the move to provide for this kind of representation no doubt, did so with the best of motives within the limits of the Law laid down in the Statute Book. The danger is, however, that this so-called verligte move is seen as an end in itself. After all, the Black people cannot expect everything overnight, it all takes time and patience! In the