
South African Churches Call Apartheid Sin

An historic conference draws South African Adventism into an ecumenical arena.

by Eric C. Webster



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A month after I represented the South African Union at the historic national churches' conference held in Rustenburg, November 5-9, 1990, I reported to the union executive committee. I painted a brief verbal picture of the conference and read the entire Rustenburg Declaration. The executive committee, representing white, colored, and Indian Adventists in South Africa, sensed that a significant document was in their hands, but did not take time to critically analyze it. The document was not accepted, merely noted. However, a committee has been appointed to explore the steps necessary to open negotiations between the black and white unions in South Africa to ensure a racially united witness of the Seventh-day Adventist churches.

I was not the only Adventist delegate to the Rustenburg Conference. There I met David T. Bandla, ministerial director of the Trans-Orange Conference, who represented the Southern Union Mission, comprised of black Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa. I invited Pastor Bandla to share my room during the conference, and we had the opportunity to talk and pray together. As we discussed the proceedings, it became clear that he identified with the basic direction of the conference.

I also had the opportunity of meeting church leaders across a wide spectrum of South African church life. On the two-hour minibus ride from Johannesburg, I sat next to Rev. Michael Nuttal, Anglican bishop of Natal. We shared not only personal interests, but also views on church life, doctrine, and practice. Also in the minibus, I met Michael Cassidy, an Anglican evangelical layman, and author of the best-seller *The Passing Summer*. Cassidy proved to be one of the main architects of not only the Rustenburg Conference, but also its Declaration.

The opening worship service was conducted by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of Cape Town. It is strange how one's own perspective often colors one's perceptions of people. To many middle-of-the-road, white South Africans, Desmond Tutu appears to be an instigator of instability, especially with his pro-sanctions stance. But as I listened to him again, and heard him speak of the God of surprises, I realized that when you take time to listen to another man's heartbeat, feel his pain, and share his dreams, you know there is another side.

Especially impressive was his commentary on the possibility of our dreaming dreams and seeing visions:

Visions of a land whose people are knit as one. Visions of a land that is repentant, that is forgiven and forgiving. Visions of a land where justice will flow like a river. Visions of a land where we will discover that we were created for fellowship, for togetherness, for love, for joy,

for peace, for reconciliation, for justice, for goodness, for compassion, for laughter, for caring, or for sharing. Visions of a land where we will know that we were made for family, since we have a God whom we address as "Our Father." During the conference I had

opportunity to chat with Desmond Tutu. When he discovered I was a Seventh-day Adventist, he indicated that when he was General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, his secretary was a Seventh-day Adventist, Tembe Sekgaphane (see "Bleeding Silently—Adventists in South Africa," by Roy Branson, *Spectrum*, Vol. 17, No. 2).

Voices of Conscience

CONFESSION

I confess before you and before the Lord, not only my own sin and guilt, and my personal responsibility and structural wrongs that have been done to many of you and the results of which you and our country are still suffering from, but vicariously, I dare also to do that in the name of the NGK of which I am a member, and for the Afrikaaner people as a whole.

I have the liberty to do just that, because the NGK at its latest synod has declared apartheid a sin and confessed its own guilt and negligence in not warning against it and distancing itself from it long ago.

—*Professor Willie Jonker, University of Stellenbosch theologian, at the National Conference of Churches.*

RESPONSES TO PROFESSOR WILLIE JONKER'S CONFESSION

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Professor Jonker made a statement that certainly touched me, and I think touched others of us when in public he made a confession and asked to be forgiven. And I believe that I certainly stand under pressure of God's Holy Spirit to say as I have said in my sermon, when that confession is made, then those of us who have been wronged must say "We forgive you." And that together we may move to the reconstruction of our land. It is not cheaply made and the response is not cheaply made.

Dr. Pieter Potgieter, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church

Mr. Chairman, thank you for granting our request that we may have the opportunity of making a short statement this morning.

It became clear to us that there was at least some doubt in conference on the official position of the NGK regarding the confession of guilt by

Professor Jonker in his paper yesterday morning.

The delegates of the NG Kerk want to state unambiguously that we fully identify ourselves with the statement of Professor Jonker on the position of this church. He has in fact precisely reiterated the decision of our General Synod in Bloemfontein two weeks ago.

We would like to see this decision of Synod as the basis of reconciliation with all people and all churches.

The issue of restitution after confession has also been raised. From the Minutes of our Synod it will be clear that we did embark on a process of restitution, both in our relationship to our own family of NG churches and to South African society in general. We could for instance refer to the adoption of the Declaration of Christian principles by Synod which includes a Bill of Human Rights.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

I heard people say that I had no mandate in a sense to have accepted a confession on behalf of anybody except as it were myself and I believe that it is right for people to say so. It is the height of presumption for me to have suggested that I was speaking on behalf of anybody in a sense, though I need also to say that I have been ministered to by very many people in my life and I want to give thanks to God for that.

Malusi Mpumlwana stood up here to tell you about his experiences of detention and torture. When I was General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, Malusi Mpumlwana came to Johannesburg on one occasion. He has said here that he had difficulty forgiving, but I want to tell you that on that occasion he said, "You know Father, when they torture you, you look on them and you say, 'By the way, these are God's children,'" and he said, "and you know they need you," meaning himself, to

In the second session of Monday afternoon, the co-chairman of the conference, the Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane, presented his insightful paper, entitled "Understanding the South African Reality." He suggested that, in South Africa, apartheid had built two worlds, written two histories, and fashioned two gods.

Throughout the conference I

was impressed by Frank Chikane's Christian spirit. This was especially significant to me in light of some of his past experiences. While he was in prison, he was tortured by a white official who belonged to the same church as he did, the Apostolic Faith Mission. The prison official believed that he was doing God's will as he administered this "justice."

The highlight of the conference came on Tuesday morning when the church leader I knew best, Professor Willie Jonker, a leading Dutch Reformed theologian from Stellenbosch University, made his spontaneous confession regarding apartheid at the end of his paper, "Obstacles to a United Witness."

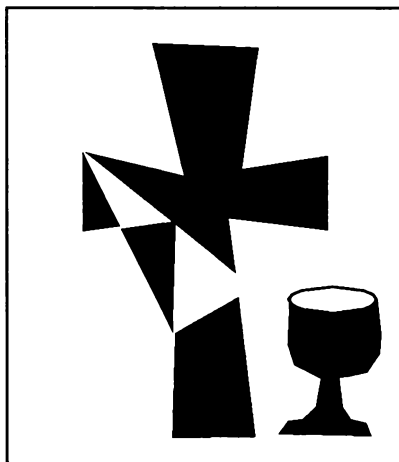
I received my doctorate from

help them recover the humanity they are losing. And he spoke out of that kind of pain, and I listened to him as a young person, ministering to me of the meaning of forgiveness.

Malusi was at a funeral in King William's Town and they found someone they suspected to be a police informer. Malusi called on a number of us to please come, because they were going to kill that man. Malusi and others held hands to ward off people who were angry. The man who was going to be killed had not even confessed, but Malusi took his life in his hands as he stood against that crowd.

I was part of a South African Council of Churches delegation when we went to Mahumba, a village which was being demolished and the people were going to be uprooted. The church leaders went to Mahumba to pray with the people before their removal. And as we prayed in the rain at about midnight, one of the old men in the village whose home was about to be demolished, whose schools had already been demolished, stood up and prayed a prayer that I will never understand. The man said, "Thank you, God, for loving us." I have never understood that prayer.

And then I have been with men like Walter Sisulu and others who have been in jail for 25 to 27 years for having the audacity to say they are human and they come out of that experience and they have an incredible capacity to love. They have no bitterness, no longing for revenge, but a deep commitment to renew South



Africa. And I am humbled as I stand in front of such people. And so dear friends, I think I am convicted by the Holy Spirit of God and by the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are no guarantees of grace. When Jesus Christ looked at Zaccheus, he had not guaranteed that Zaccheus would respond to the grace of his forgiveness and love. We are people of grace who have to have the vulnerability of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus Christ, in accepting Zaccheus, released Zaccheus so that Zaccheus could then say, "I will make restitution."

God has brought us to this moment, and I just want to say to you, I am deeply humbled, and I speak only for myself. I cannot, when someone says, "Forgive me," say, "I do not." For I cannot pray the prayer that we prayed, "Forgive as we forgive." Our brothers in the NG Church came to me and said, "It is going to be up to us to show the genuineness of what we have said, in actions."

But my church has to confess too. My church has to confess its racism. I have to confess as a black person. How many times have I treated others in my own community as if they were less than the children of God? What is my share in our common sin? And I just pray that all of us will know that we are being led by a gracious God, the God of grace, and that we will see God putting us at the start of wonderful things for this land. Pray God that we will respond to your grace graciously.

Stellenbosch. Professor Jonker was my mentor during the five years of my doctoral program in apologetics and ethics, and the supervisor of my doctoral dissertation, "A Critical Analysis of Seventh-day Adventist Christology." During that time and since, we have regularly met at meetings of the Dogmatic Society. I had always known him as an honest and sincere Christian scholar.

Immediately after Professor Jonker's confession, Archbishop Desmond Tutu arose and responded by extending forgiveness. During the remainder of the day there was much private discussion as to whether these two men had acted in their personal capacities or whether they had the right to act on behalf of others. That night, the official delegation of four from the Dutch Reformed Church met with Professor Jonker and Johan Hoyno.

The next morning, Dr. Pieter Potgieter, moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, made a statement identifying the Dutch Reformed delegates with the statement of confession made by Professor Jonker the previous day. They said it was in harmony with the decision of the General Synod of their church, made two weeks earlier in Bloemfontein.

At the conclusion of this statement, Archbishop Desmond Tutu again arose and gave an extended clarification of his previous brief statement which, no doubt, will become a classic in the field of Christian forgiveness and tolerance.

Much of our time at the conference was taken up in small group discussions. I belonged to a group of about 10 who were a good sample of the conference mix in terms of race and denomination. Our chairman was a Methodist minister; there was a black member who had felt the hand of the "system"; a white theologian from one of our universities, well-known for his anti-

apartheid and antigovernment views; and Dr. Pieter Potgieter, moderator of the white Dutch Reformed Church, who had now become the focal point of drama.

By Wednesday the conference decided that it should produce some kind of united declaration by the end of the session. A draft committee was therefore appointed, and began work. On Thursday morning the first draft was presented to delegates, and our small groups began discussing the document. Thursday afternoon and evening the full plenary session gave consideration to suggestions from the small groups.

I found myself asking many questions. I wondered what I would do if the conference was asked to vote on the final declaration, or if we would be requested to sign it. To what extent could I commit the South African Union Conference to the declaration? Should I feel chagrined to find myself in sympathy with the feeling of the Dutch Reformed delegation? While standing firm in their denunciation of apartheid as a sin, they became disturbed at the trend toward phrasing the declaration in terms that they felt were too radical.

By Thursday evening I had overcome some of my hesitations. That night and Friday morning I spoke in the plenary session, appealing for moderation in the wording of the declaration. This was probably not a popular thing to do.

Considering the delegates present, I would place myself in the center as a moderate. A few were so far to the right that they considered the whole conference a waste of time. This small minority has, since its close, vigorously opposed the entire conference. Many delegates were to my left, and a smaller group could have been even farther to the left.

By Thursday night the first draft had been considered, and the draft-

ing committee worked right through the night to present the second draft early Friday morning. The entire morning was spent in going through this paper, paragraph by paragraph, in plenary session.

By noon the arduous but challenging task was completed. The document was not put to the vote, neither was there any call for signatures. It was simply taken for granted that after all the discussion and agreement, paragraph by paragraph, the document had been accepted by consensus. It was also understood that delegates would take this declaration back to their respective churches for study and adoption.

At noon on Friday, November 10, the second draft was placed in the hands of the editorial committee for final revision. Just after lunch at 2:00 p.m., as delegates were leaving, the Rustenburg Declaration was placed in their hands.

One month after the Rustenburg Conference, the South African Union Conference session met. I attended as a member of the union executive committee. It was interesting that Union President James Bradfield's opening address focused on human relations and church unity. He raised the question of whether the present racial divisions in the church structure in South Africa were in harmony with God's will for the church.

The theme of church unity proved to be a particular burden on the hearts of delegates from the Good Hope Conference, comprised of colored Adventists in the Cape Town area. Through their insistence, the union session soon found itself discussing church unity.

To the credit of the delegates, they unanimously adopted the General Conference policy on human relations. A further action was taken requesting the South African Union Executive Committee to appoint a committee to implement this world church policy.

It was after the union session that I reported to the union executive committee. The reaction to my report was mixed. Some members even expressed the view that Adventists should not attend such gatherings in the future, as they were too ecumenical. I reminded those present that the church of Christ had been at work at Rustenburg. The Christian church does not consist of only Seventh-day Adventists. I

pointed out that our own teaching of the fundamental beliefs in Chapter 11 of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*. . . . defines the church as "the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." Chapter 12 then deals with the remnant who have been entrusted with a special reformatory message to the world and to the whole church.

The Rustenburg Conference sought to grapple with the thorny

socio-political problem of apartheid. Many of us had hoped that such issues could be divorced from the church and confined to the political arena. However, we discover that the roots of apartheid are intertwined with our moral and religious lives. Some white Seventh-day Adventists may regard the declaration as too political and radical, but its basic message has thrust our society forward on the road to reconciliation.

The Rustenburg Declaration

PREAMBLE

We, 230 representatives [This includes 26 overseas visitors who came as observers only.] of approximately 100 Christian denominations, church associations and interdenominational agencies participating in the National Conference of Church Leaders in South Africa, have come together in Rustenburg in the belief that it is under the authority of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have been convinced anew of God's amazing grace by the way in which, despite our wide variety of backgrounds, we have begun to find one another and to discover a broad consensus through worship, prayer, confrontation, confession and costly forgiveness. We have sought a spirit of patience, mutual care and openness as we have tried to discern the mind of Christ and have often been surprised how our views on many issues have converged. Some of us are not in full accord with everything said in this conference, but on this we are all agreed, namely the unequivocal rejection of apartheid as a sin. We are resolved to press forward in fellowship and consultation towards a common mind and programme of action.

Coming from diverse Christian traditions, histories, political persuasions and cultural backgrounds, we engaged amidst joy and pain, love and suspicion,

in a process of soul-searching and wrestling with the theological and socio-political complexities of our country. In the process, we had a strong sense that God was at work among us. We became aware that He was surprising us by His grace which cut through our fears and apprehension. We give praise to this liberating God who is forever faithful in visiting His people in their hour of need.

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The Conference has met at a critical time of transition in our country. We thank God that we are already in a period of gestation with the hope of a democratic, peaceful and just dispensation emerging from our nation. Yet many people are continuing to suffer immensely under ongoing structures of injustice. Recent months have also seen the upsurge of violence in many areas and much brutalizing of innocent people. There is also extensive alienation among young blacks and a seemingly interminable crisis in black education. Unemployment has reached alarming proportions. The crisis in our land has also been aggravated by grossly inadequate housing in the black community. All this is leading to the social and economic disintegration of our society.

1.2 We believe, however, that we stand on the threshold of new things. There appears to be the possibility of a

new dispensation and the promise of reconciliation between South Africans as some of our black and white leaders prepare to negotiate together for a new and liberated nation of equity and justice. In this context Christians are called to be a sign of hope from God, and to share vision of a new society which we are prepared to strive for, and if needs be, to suffer for.

1.3 We acknowledge that this hope will elude us unless we can break completely with the past. Accordingly we make the following confession.

2. CONFESSION

2.1 While in this document we focus attention on apartheid, we recognise that there are many other sins in our society which call for repentance.

2.2 As representatives of the Christian Church in South Africa, we recognize that the South African situation owes much to the context of western colonialism, to the stifling of conscience by inherited social attitudes which blind communities to the wrong they inflict and to a weakness common to the world-wide church in dealing with social evil. Now, however, we confess our own sin and acknowledge our part in the heretical policy of apartheid which has led to such extreme suffering for so many in our land. We denounce apartheid in its intention, its implementation and its

consequences as an evil policy. The practice and defence of apartheid as though it were biblical and theologically legitimated is an act of disobedience to God, a denial of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a sin against our unity in the Holy Spirit.

2.3 We remember with sorrow the victims of apartheid who have suffered and continue to suffer humiliation, dispossession and death. We pay tribute to those who have stood resolutely for justice and cared for the oppressed.

2.4 We know that without genuine repentance and practical restitution we do not appropriate God's forgiveness and that without justice true reconciliation between people is impossible. We also know that this process must begin with a penitent Church.

2.5 We therefore confess that we have in different ways practised, supported, permitted or refused to resist apartheid.

2.5.1 Some of us actively misused the Bible to justify apartheid, leading many to believe that it had the sanction of God. Later, we insisted that its motives were good even though its effects were evil. Our slowness to denounce apartheid as sin encouraged the Government to retain it.

2.5.2 Some of us ignored apartheid's evil, spiritualising the Gospel by preaching the sufficiency of individual salvation without social transformation. We adopted an allegedly neutral stance which in fact resulted in complicity with apartheid. We were often silent when our sisters and brothers were suffering persecution.

2.5.3 Some of us were blind in condemning apartheid but timid in resisting it. Some churches failed to give effective support to courageous individuals at the forefront of protest against evil. We spoke out for justice but our own church structures continued to oppress. We blamed other churches and were blind to our own inconsistencies.

2.6 Those of us who have perpetuated and benefitted from apartheid are guilty of a colonial arrogance toward black culture. We have allowed State institutions to do our sinning for us. In our desire to preserve the Church we

have sometimes ceased to be the Church. We have often been more influenced by our ideologies than by Christ's Gospel. We have continued to move in separate worlds while claiming to be one Body. We have insulated ourselves from the pain of black Christians. By failing sufficiently to challenge the violence of apartheid and its enforcement, we have permitted a culture of violence in which our people believe that force is the only way to deal with any dispute. Human life has become cheap. By our faltering witness we have allowed families to be broken, children to go uneducated and millions of people to be denied work. We have erected economic systems based on race. By our disunity and disrespect for other people's beliefs and opinions we have encouraged a fragmented and intolerant society. Most of all, we have been unwilling to suffer, loving our comfort more than God's justice and clinging to our privilege rather than binding ourselves to the poor and oppressed of our land.

2.7 Those of us who are the victims of apartheid acknowledge our own contribution to the failure of the Church. While colonialism and oppression have damaged our self-esteem and eroded the fibres of "ubuntu" (humanness) which held our communities together, we acknowledge that many of us have responded with timidity and fear, failing to challenge our oppression. Instead we have acquiesced in it and accepted an inferior status. Some of us have become willing instruments of the repressive state machinery. Others have reacted to oppression with a desire for revenge. Many of us who have achieved privilege have exploited others. An indifference to suffering has crept into our communities, often leading to ostracism of those who have stood courageously for justice and truth. Some of us have failed to be instruments of peace in a situation of growing intolerance of ideological differences. Others of us have also neglected our calling to contribute to the theological renewal of the Church.

2.8 Those of us who are male confess that we have often disregarded the human dignity of women and ignored the sexism of many of our Church, social, political, economic and family structures. By limiting the role and ministry of women—as was reflected in this Conference—we have impoverished the Church. We have been insensitive to the double oppression suffered by black

women under sexism and apartheid.

2.9 We confess that we have prevented youth from full participation in the life of the Church and have ignored the issues facing youth. We acknowledge with sorrow that apartheid has brutalised young people and turned youth against youth in conflict.

2.10 Therefore in these and other ways, all the representatives at this Conference confess that we have often let the world rather than the Gospel mould us and we have served our selfish interests rather than Christ.

2.11 With a broken and contrite spirit we ask the forgiveness of God and of our fellow South Africans. We call upon members of our Churches to make this confession their own. We call upon the Government of South Africa to join us in a public confession of guilt and a statement of repentance for wrongs perpetrated over the years.

3. DECLARATION

3.1 To the Church of Jesus Christ in South Africa we address an appeal to adopt our confession and pledge itself to restitution. We call for an end to racial disparities in clergy remuneration; to deploy clergy without regard to colour or social status; and to end all discrimination within the Church on the basis of sex or race. We call on Church leaders to carry the confessions and commitments of this Declaration into the life of every congregation in the country.

3.2 To the Nation we declare the compelling necessity for all to renounce and turn from personal, economic, social and political sin, most especially the sin of racism in both our souls and our structures. We call every South African to be positively involved in nation-building.

3.3 To Political Leaders, we express appreciation for the progress made thus far and we address an appeal that you meet urgently to negotiate a new and just order for our country. We call on the Government to repeal as a matter of urgency all apartheid laws, such as the Land Act and the Group Areas, Population Registration, Homelands, Black Local Authorities, Black Education and Internal Security Acts. We also call for the granting of unconditional indemnity

to political exiles, the immediate release of all political prisoners and for the return of property confiscated from previously banned organisations. We assure all leaders of our prayers in these historic and demanding tasks.

3.4 To the World-Wide Church we declare gratitude for loving care, confrontation, prayer, support and solidarity over many years. We ask you all to continue to stand with us.

4. AFFIRMATION

We affirm and highlight the following:

4.1 Justice

4.1.1 The Bible reveals God as a God of compassionate love who has a special care for the sinner, the down-trodden, the poor and all who suffer injustice. Obedience to Christ therefore requires that we develop an economic system based on justice, compassion and co-responsibility, so that those in need benefit more than those who have more than they need. More equitable wealth distribution must go hand in hand with economic growth.

4.1.2 After decades of oppression, the removal of discriminatory laws will have to be accompanied by affirmative acts of restitution in the fields of health care, psychological healing, education, housing, unemployment, economic infrastructure, and especially land ownership. For many years, greed has led to the taking of land from the poor and weak. Both Church and State must address the issue of restoring land to dispossessed people.

4.2 Church and State

4.2.1 In the past we have often forfeited our right to address the State by our own complicity in racism, economic and other injustice and the denial of human rights. We also recognise that in our country the State has often co-opted the Church. The Church has often attempted to seek protection for its own vested interests from the State. Our history compromises our credibility in addressing Church-State issues.

4.2.2 We therefore commit ourselves to the struggle for a just, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South

Africa so that our witness may carry greater credibility when we address Church-State relations in the new dispensation.

4.2.3 Our highest loyalty as Christians is always to God. The State is always under God, its power is limited and it is a servant for good, firstly to God and then impartially to all the people it represents. We therefore ask that the separation of Church and State, the necessity for the freedom to believe, practise and propagate religion, and freedom of association be guaranteed equally to all.

4.2.4 On the basis of biblical and ethical values, we call upon those negotiating a new South African constitution to respect the following principles in the Constitution:

4.2.4.1 The preciousness and value of human life created in the image of God.

4.2.4.2 The exclusion of all racial, gender, class and religious discrimination of justice.

4.2.4.3 The acceptance of the Rule of Law under an independent judiciary.

4.2.4.4 The entrenchment of a Bill of Rights subject to the judiciary alone, noting the Christian conviction that basic human rights are God-given and not therefore conferred or removable by any State.

4.2.4.5 The establishment of a democratic elective process based on one-person, one-vote on a common voters roll, in a multiparty democracy in a unitary State.

4.2.4.6 The sincere commitment to employment, housing, education, health and welfare for all South Africans.

4.2.4.7 That the power of the security machinery of State, including the police, be limited for the protection of the population.

4.2.4.8 The embodiment of the right of individuals or religious groups to preserve and protect the moral values that affect marriage, family life and particularly moral norms. We express particular concern for the protection of children from abuse. Protection should also be available to all religious groups in

terms of their life and world view.

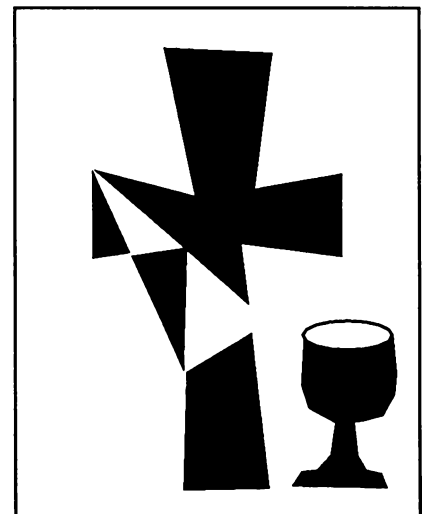
4.2.5 Further we call for the negotiation of a new constitution by a body clearly and fully representative of all South Africans. We ask the Government to discuss with other political parties the setting up of a form of administration or government which will ensure that the interests of all South Africans are adequately represented in the transitional period until a new constitution has been agreed upon.

4.3 Peace

4.3.1 In both Old and New Testaments God's Peace or Shalom speaks of a comprehensive wholeness and rightness in all relationships, including those between God and His people, between human and human and between humans and creation. In South Africa Peace and Shalom are shattered, not only by personal but also by social and structural sin. The consequences are devastating: racial alienation, mistrust, humiliation, exploitation of humans and the environment, privation of basic needs, denial of self-worth. Perhaps most devastating has been the emergence of a social climate in which violence and death rather than co-operation and life have become the norm.

4.3.2 The causes of violence include inter alia:

- Decades of exploitation of black workers leading to the creation of desperate economic inequities,
- The denial of full political rights to most South Africans,



- The resulting struggle by black South Africans against an oppressive white political system, culminating in violence becoming the norm for political response,

- The apparent emergence of "third forces" dedicated to sowing confusion,

- Poverty, inter-group rivalry and competition for limited resources,

- Power struggles between some political parties,

- The uprooting of families from their traditional homes, leading to the breakdown of family structures and parental authority,

- The resulting spiritual problems,

- Spiritual principalities and powers of evil activated across the human spectrum.

4.3.3 We need to respond to violence by:

- Mobilising church agencies to help collect evidence about violence and present it to the authorities and political organisations,

- Condemning the perpetrators of all forms of violence,

- Supporting victims materially and spiritually,

- Encouraging all South Africans to enter the process of negotiations, with conditions of safety to facilitate this being fully ensured,

- Praying for the cessation of violence and the speedy social, economic and political transformation of the land,

- Convening a task force to coordinate Church strategies,

- Calling a peace conference to bring together leaders who can help end violence.

4.4 Spirituality, Mission and Evangelism

4.4.1 The Church's work of mission

is a consequence of its worship, prayer, fellowship and spirituality. We commit ourselves to deepen these aspects of the practice of our faith. We resolve to fulfil the Great Commission and by evangelistic faithfulness to bring men and women to repentance and personal faith, new birth and salvation and to help them to work this out in a witness which engages the world. We recognise our need for the equipping fullness of the Holy Spirit's fruit and gifts and we call on God's people to pray for spiritual renewal in the land.

5. RESTITUTION AND A COMMITMENT TO ACTION

5.1 Confession and forgiveness necessarily require restitution. Without it, a confession of guilt is incomplete.

5.2 As a first step towards restitution, the Church must examine its land ownership and work for a return of all land expropriated from relocated communities to its original owners. "White" schools must be opened to people of all races and programmes of affirmative action embarked upon at all levels of black education.

5.3 We call for a National Day of Prayer for the purpose of acts of intercession, confession, forgiveness and reconciliation. We urge that these be accompanied by a declaration of intention to engage in a common witness to God's love and justice. Conference requests the formation of a Liaison Committee to plan such a day of prayer and to consider the recommendation of the "Silent Minute" concept.

5.4 Conference asks churches which own private schools to review their policies on such schools with a view to making them more accessible to the underprivileged.

5.5 We request the Liaison Committee to provide study material for use by the churches seeking to equip members with a better understanding of their mission in a new South Africa.

5.6 Conference asks churches to make available financial and human resources to enable the work of reconstruction and renewal of South African

society. Conference asks churches to co-operate in programmes for the welcoming back and rehabilitation of exiles.

5.7 Conference requests churches and organisations present to place on their agendas as a matter of urgency the following:

- The need to work toward a new economic order in which the needs of the poor can be adequately addressed.

- Provision of work for the unemployed.

- Provision of adequate homes and essential services for the poor.

- The need to work toward parity in standards of living between black and white people.

- The need to eradicate poverty and hunger.

- Affirmative action to enable transfer of some of the economic power presently in white hands.

- Consideration of major health issues, e.g. AIDS.

5.8 Conference authorises the Steering Committee to pass any information it considers might be of interest to community organisations.

6. CONCLUSION

We give thanks for God's past grace and faithfulness in our land by which He has seen fit to use so many of His people here, in spite of our many weaknesses and sins, to bear witness to His Name, to proclaim His Saving Gospel and bring blessing to many, to labour for justice and to care for the poor, oppressed and needy. We give praise in our belief that in wrath He has remembered mercy. This being so we are enabled by His Spirit to move forward together in His Name and call others to do likewise so that the Kingdom of our God and His Christ may be extended far and wide both in our land and beyond. And so to that Name which is above every name, the Name of Jesus, we ascribe all might, majesty, dominion and praise. Amen.