

# Chapter Sixteen

## BLACK COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

IN THE SEVENTIES Black South Africans are seeking a more effective means of rallying their common aspirations round a quest for identification as blacks living within a reality of domination by a white supra-structure and anti-black manipulations through economic power and cultural alienation. Groups and organisations have emerged whose basic aim is to bring back to the black community a black identification and an articulation of the black experience.

The Black Community Programmes is one such organisation. BCP was founded in answer to the need for an association to deal with programmes involving welfare, culture, black theology, education and literacy, black arts, self-help and other relevant projects.

Spro-cas 2 (Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society—Phase 2), from which the Black Community Programmes grew as an independent organisation, was originally sponsored by the South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa. The working relationship between Spro-cas 2 (before dissolution at the end of 1973) and Black Community Programmes was a natural development, since both had to a large measure been formed with the aim of promoting true Christian principles in a racist society.

The Black Community Programmes underwent further growth when a regional branch office was opened at King William's Town. The other regional branch office is in Johannesburg. It is through the regional and branch offices, as well as the head office in Durban, that BCP has been able to express its concern and develop its programmes in response to the critical circumstances of the urban and rural black community.

*Goals of the Black Community Programmes*

The BCP began in 1972. It has been chiefly involved in programme development in response to identified interests and needs of the black community in ways consistent with its goals:

To help the black community become aware of its identity.

To help the black community create a sense of its own power.

To enable the black community to organise itself, analyse its needs and problems and also mobilise its resources to meet these needs.

To develop black leadership capable of guiding the development of the black community.

In consistency with the above goals the Black Community Programmes:

- (a) Initiates the principles of self-help and self-determination through inculcating, fostering, directing, maintaining and extending self-reliance in the black community, by encouraging the people in the urban and rural areas to deal with their needs in setting up an appropriate agency or organisation with a structure capable of meeting these needs.
- (b) Promotes leadership and clear understanding of issues facing the black community through co-operation with Christian churches and other black organisations in the extension and development of religious, moral, educational and cultural work amongst blacks, by bringing together available leadership and arranging appropriate training to enable them to have a clearer understanding of their work and equip them with the skills to effectively carry it out.
- (c) Co-ordinates common strategies to prevent unnecessary overlapping where several organisations exist to deal with the same problem in an unco-ordinated manner, by promoting and developing goodwill, co-operation and fellowship among all the components of the black community throughout the Republic of South Africa.
- (d) Enables, where leadership is the problem, the setting up of skills-training seminars for persons in leadership positions of organisations, through leadership courses aimed at equipping participants with skills necessary for effective programming and management etc.—by fostering, organising and directing the moral, mental and physical educational and well-being of all black South Africans through relevant programmes.
- (e) Communicates fuller knowledge of what the different black organisations are doing and the extent of overlapping and duplication, by developing research alone or in co-operation with others.

'Leadership Training' was understood to include:

Top Youth Leadership Week

Workshop on Programming for Youth Groups

Technique Workshop on Community Action

Workshop on Group Dynamics and Team Leadership.

### *Church Programmes*

The first church conference was sponsored by BCP in May 1972 when 27 clergymen and several laymen attended. This meeting was highlighted by the demand that came from the conference for a more effective and black-orientated preaching of the Gospel. Conference spent some time spelling out the kind of leader which the black community requires. A conclusion was reached that effective leadership was impossible without competency, discipline and strong character, and that such qualities were possible only in a society where leaders helped make the community become aware of its identity, power and development.

On this basis in February 1973 a 'Black Theology Agency' was formed at another conference, also sponsored by BCP. The agency's aims were to co-ordinate all work in the field of Black Theology in South Africa, to provide interested people with background material on Black Theology, to conduct research in this field, and to plan courses and refresher seminars.

By the end of 1973 arrangements for the financing and the acquiring of offices and staff of the proposed agency were still being made by an interim committee. The Border Council of Churches also worked in close co-operation with the branch office at King William's Town. A church conference for black clergy and laymen was organised by the branch staff and proved highly successful.

### *Educational Programmes*

A Home Education Scheme was planned by the Eastern Cape Province Branch office. The idea was to help people see the scheme as a local venture and identify with it rather than see it as a paternalistic approach by an outside group. There were attempts to assist the promotion and revival of creches now that black women have become more involved in the country's labour input and spend most of the day away from their children.

A Health Education Scheme is planned to provide the black community with essential health services, both curative and preventative, which were found to be badly lacking especially in the rural and 'resettlement' areas.

Owing to restrictions imposed by the government on the Programmes Officer of the Workers' Project it was difficult to continue with the project according to the original aims.

A women's programme assistant was appointed to make skills and resources available to women's groups and others such as housewives, nurses and social workers. By the end of 1973 plans to launch this project had been finalised.

### *Bannings Against BCP*

The community development work that BCP intends continuing within the black community was confronted with problems through the bannings imposed on members of its staff.

The first to be banned were the Branch Executive (Johannesburg), Mr Bokwe Mafuna, and the Branch Executive (King William's Town), Mr Bantu S. Biko. Both were banned in March 1973. Biko was then Programme Assistant at the Durban Office.

The first bannings were followed in August by the restrictions and house-arrest imposed on Mrs Sam Moodley, until then Programme Assistant at the Durban office. Restrictions were then imposed on the Director of BCP, Mr Bennie Khoapa. Mr Khoapa is confined to the Umlazi magisterial district. The Programme Assistant at the King William's Town Branch office, Mr M. Mpumlwana, also had restriction orders placed on him.