

Homelands lose out in church squabble

SACC HOLDING

BACK KWAZULU

AID FUNDS, SAYS

CHURCHMAN

WIDESPREAD publicity has been given to claims by a churchman that numerous children are dying while church leaders engage in an international squabble about getting aid to Natal/KwaZulu drought and flood victims.

Mr Horst-Klaus Hofmann, of the German Institute for Youth and Society in Bensheim, claims that money donated in West Germany and channeled through the South African Council of Churches (SACC) for hunger victims in Natal and KwaZulu has not been used for that purpose.

In the past 10 years it is estimated about R12 million has been given to the SACC by German churches.

The chairman of the Zululand Council of Churches (ZCC), the Rev James Massey, said in an interview with the Star, in Johannesburg, that he wanted to find out what was going on with the aid.

"There is considerable money being held by the South African Council of Churches," he said.

"Thankfully we are getting help from other groups but many children are still dying from malnutrition-related diseases."

Mr Hofmann asked in his article: "Why has the South African Council of Churches not reacted to urgent pleas for help from the KwaZulu/Natal area?"

"Why has the SACC not appealed to the German churches for assistance after this catastrophe? Are Christians of that area not worthy of being helped?"

Mr Hofmann visited South Africa with a delegation from his organisation

in June and July and travelled extensively throughout Natal and KwaZulu.

They specifically studied the help churches are giving to drought and cyclone victims.

He said they saw aid from the Red Cross, the KwaZulu Government and Inkatha but only 100 bags of mealie meal from the churches.

Mr Hofmann said he was "stunned"



by this as he knew German churches had collected "millions" for emergency aid.

He became "very worried", he said, when he was told by the Rev Sol Jacob from the Pietermaritzburg Council of Churches that the SACC had not reacted to his call on February 7 for emergency help.

The problem, said the Star, is said to centre on differences of opinion between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front.

"Inkatha is on the SACC blacklist," said the Rev Massey.

Chief Buthelezi told Clarion Call that it was a matter of record that the SACC was hostile to himself, Inkatha and KwaZulu.

Some organisations discriminated against KwaZulu for political reasons even though, as a leader of the largest Black group in the country, he had vowed never to accept "so-called independence".

It was also well known that his role as Chief Minister of the Zulus was an historical one and he had made it his life's work to block the South African Government from disenfranchising six million Zulus.

It was "tragic" that defenceless Black peasants were being used as "pawns" by certain people to get at him and Inkatha, Chief Buthelezi added.

The administrative director of the SACC, Mr Dan Vaughan, was quoted as saying that he had written to Germany seeking clarification of the claims.

He denied the SACC was holding back funds.

The German article alleged that the SACC was accused of not recognising the homelands because of "the apartheid foundation."

It is also alleged that the SACC had allocated very little of R920 000 given by a German church group, the EKD, to KwaZulu for hunger victims.

Where any of it was spent in KwaZulu it went on carpentry or agricultural projects.

Rev Massey has acknowledged that, up until August, the ZCC has received R10 000 from the SACC.

"Do you know how far R10 000 goes when you are trying to feed many thousands of people?" he asked.

The UDF has denied that it has any influence on the allocation of funds by the SACC.