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Ecunews Volume 13/1981

September 4, 1981

Referring to funds paid out by the Western Province Council of Churches for bail for arrested women, Bishop Tutu said: "If it is a crime, I am ready to go to jail for giving that money. I am not ashamed that we give money to get mother and their children out of jail. "Judgment will surely come on all of us in this land unless we change, unless we are filled with the love that drives out fear, unless we are prepared to share the good things of life more equitable and unless we treat all human beings as God's children," The Bishop said.

FORMER S.A.C.C. PRESIDENT CONDEMNS
INTER-CHURCH MEETING CALLED BY NGK

CAPE TOWN - Ds. Sam Buti the scribe of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Africa (Africans) has strongly condemned the inter church meeting held in Pretoria on Thursday last week, organised by the white NGK.

In NGK circles the meeting has been hailed as an ecumenical break-through and the most important church meeting in South Africa since the controversial Cottesloe Conference in 1960.

In a special statement Ds Buti who attended the conference, accused the white NGK of trying to bypass The South African Council of Churches, and said:-

"The NGK only participated in Inter-Church meetings when it had taken the initiative and that it had a history of withdrawing from ecumenical gatherings.

That it was theologically unsound and unacceptable only to invite churches which basically held the same confession.

That it was important to embark on a discussion "about our differences and disagreements" and that issues such as Nyanga should be discussed.

Ten Churches attended the conference organised by Dr. Pierre Rossouw Director of Ecumenical relations and information of the General Synod of the NGK.

The churches were, the Afrikaans Baptist Church, The Church of England, The Federation of Lutheran Churches in South Africa, The Methodist Church, The N.G. Kerk, The NGK in Africa, the NG Sending Kerk (Coloureds), the Presbyterian Church, the Church of The Province of Southern Africa, and The United Congregational Church.

In his full statement Ds. Buti said :-

Following the meeting of representatives of some Protestant Churches organised by Dr. Pierre Rossouw Director of Ecumenical Affairs of the N.G. Kerk in Pretoria on 27th August, 1981, I feel compelled to make public my objections against this type of meeting which I also stated in the meeting itself.

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- 1) In South Africa there exists an ecumenical body The South African Council of Churches, representing 15 million christians, which has in the past repeatedly invited the N.G.K. to become a member or an observer of The South African Council of Churches and which invitation has been turned down by this Church. If the N.G. Kerk is truly concerned about ecumenical relations and ecumenical dialogue why does it not join The South African Council of Churches? Surely it must be aware of the fact that there are no meaningful ecumenical dialogue possible in South Africa by excluding or bypassing the South African Council of Churches as the largest ecumenical body in the Country? and, if the N.G. Kerk has major objections about The South African Council of Churches would the true christian way not be to start discussing these objections with The South African Council of Churches?
 - 2) The N.G. Kerk cannot blame me and others if we get the strong impression that the N.G. Kerk only participates in ecumenical dialogue if it can take or maintain the initiative. When this is not possible participation is followed by withdrawal - as the history of the N.G. Kerk's ecumenical dialogue proves clearly, the N.G.K. withdrew temporarily from the world alliance of reformed churches (WARC early in the century; it withdrew from the World Council of Churches in 1961, it broke its official links with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Holland (G.K.H.), and every time the withdrawal had to do primarily not with doctrinal differences but with political issues centrefng around the racial policy of apartheid.
 - 3) The view of the N.G.K. that only churches which basically hold the same confession should be invited to and included in an ecumenical dialogue is theologically unsound and therefore unacceptable. It reflects a wrong understanding of Christian Brotherhood, of the true biblical nature of ecumenism and the proper understanding of discussion and dialogue.

What theological justification can be found in scripture by any Church to exclude from discussion any other church? What justification can a reformed church give for excluding e.g. The Roman Catholic Church from ecumenical discussion and dialogue?

Is there any hope of overcoming our sinful church division in this way? If we wish to prove our sincerity in setting up such dialogue in SouthAfrica we have no right to exclude those christians who differ from us on confessional grounds - otherwise we simply increase and prolong church divisions.

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1981-09-18

AN OPEN LETTER TO DESMOND TUTU

My dear Desmond

This past week you have scarcely been out of my mind. How could you? Everybody is once again talking about you. Especially the government. And once again, they are talking in the only language they seem to know when they are addressing us: the language of accusation, threats and intimidation. But you and I know, this is really the violent verbosity of deeply fearful men.

Apparently, taking away your passport was not enough. Making the work of the South African Council of Churches infinitely more difficult did not suffice. We are now hearing the so-familiar sounds that are the prelude to "Kragdadigheid", a fact which bodes ill for you and the Council. You are, they say, "supporting subversive elements" and "encouraging a revolutionary climate in South Africa". You are now "promoting the aims of the ANC". Because of all this, you are now considered an enemy of the state, indeed, an enemy of South Africa. A dangerous subversive who does not "deserve" a passport and now even runs a greater risk - or so we hear. After having made you the victim of a campaign promise to appease the worst of the racists, they now want to use you to divert attention from their obvious inability to face the consequences of their disastrous policies and to undo the damage done to our country and its people after decades of apartheid.

My first reaction was anger. What utter rubbish, I thought. Precisely who is the danger to our society and to the future of this country? Who has caused the problem that now plagues South Africa? Who has taken away the few pitiful political rights that we had so that they could inflict their policies upon us without responsibility to us? Whose laws are making criminals out of men, women and children who want only a decent life together as a family? Whose greed and avarice claim 87% of the land and in so doing rob millions of South Africans of their birthright? Who is trampling on our humanity and our God-given dignity?

Not by any stretch of the imagination can you be accused of "creating a revolutionary climate" in South Africa. No, it is your very accusers, who through their intransigence and their stubborn refusal to respect the dignity of black personhood, are doing that. It is they who are denying us meaningful participation, insulting us with the puppet institutions they themselves would have scorned. It is they who through their draconian measures, setting aside the rule of law, have banned organisations that wanted peaceful change, detained without trial, banned and exiled the best of the sons and daughters of South Africa.

It is they who have done so much to help convince generations of black South Africans that non-violent protest has no chance in South Africa. For years we have petitioned, marched, pleaded, cried, tried to speak to the conscience of white South Africa's government. They have answered with police, with detentions and teargas, with dogs and guns. And with that infinite contempt of violent men who have nothing left but the power of the gun. No, it is not you who have turned so many of our old people into creatures without hope and joy and so many of our young people into desperadoes. It is they.