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Dear Friends of Theo & Helen Kotze:

Theo has asked me to let you all know the recent events that have happened in Cape Town. Many of you will already know that he was banned by the Government on the 19th of October. This will let you know more of the details. I am quoting now from the Argus Newspaper of the 19th of October.

"DAWN RAIDS ON CITY CLERGY AND JOURNALISTS.

"Security police made simultaneous raids from 4:30 a.m. today on the Peninsula offices of the Christian Institute, Union of Black Journalists and a number of other organizations, as well as the homes of a number of clergymen.

Those who were raided at their homes before dawn were the Rev. Theo Kotze, Cape director of the Christian Institute; Dr. Francis Wilson, head of economic research at University of Cape Town; the Rev. Moses Moletsane, and Anglican priest and a board member of the Black Community Programmes, and the Rev. David Russell, an Anglican priest, of these only Dr. Wilson, was not banned.

The first to be raided was the Rev. Theo Kotze, Methodist clergyman.

His wife, Helen, said three Security Police officers arrived at their Claremont home at 4.20 A.M. After searching the house for Christian Institute documents, they accompanied Mr. Kotze to the office of the Christian Institute at the Ecumenical Centre in Mowbray.

Loyal Staff

Mr. Kotze said the banning of his organisation would not stop him.

I'm a minister of the Gospel and nothing can change that, he said.

Carrying his belongings from the institute's offices in Mowbray, he said: I'm just too deeply grateful for the wonderful loyal staff we have and I'm terribly sad that these brave, committed young people are going to be without jobs.

'I also find it absolutely incredible that they can ban a Christian organization whose whole outlook is based on the Christian values of justice, love and reconciliation.'

He was heavily engaged in running reconciliation courses. All the documentation used for these courses were taken by Security Police.

I would have thought that the one thing this country needs right now is reconciliation, and I'm going to go right on working towards that.

Security Police refused to allow The Argus to photograph Mr. Kotze clearing up his desk. 'This is State property and we can't allow you to take pictures,' an officer said."

It is legal to make these quotes from Theo because they were given by him to the newspaper a half an hour before he was banned. These are then his last existing quotes in South Africa.

I further quote from an interview given by Helen to the Argus and published on the 24th of October.

"Helen Kotze is slim, attractive and even in this difficult time, she is composed. The Kotzes have been married for 36 years and it has been said that she's the strength of the family.

They have five children and five grandchildren.

The Kotze family has been subjected to harassment such as petrol bombs, abusive calls, tire slashing, vandalism, and even gun shots since 1971.

'And for a long time,' said Helen, 'Theo and Beyers Naude have been targets of Government action. They both spoke publicly against the Government.'

Mr. Kotze is restricted to the Wynberg magisterial district; he has to report to the Claremont police station every Wednesday; he may not enter any black, coloured or Asian area at all.

'This means that even in his own neighbourhood, he is limited. He may not walk down Lansdowne Road, two blocks away.'

He may not give educational instruction to anyone other than his children.

One of the most hard-hitting aspects is that he has no job.

'We've never had money,' Helen said, 'We have a house but we have a bond. For the moment we won't starve because we have friends but we can't live on friends forever.

'I hope to earn something .....,,' she hesitated .....as a clerk. I suppose, I know a little bookkeeping. At present there is a Methodist conference in Benoni and I imagine Theo's case will be discussed there.'

He is not allowed to attend any gathering. A gathering consists of a group of more than two people. Queues? Processions? Restaurants? Church?

'Theo does not intend being restricted from going to church,' said Helen vehemently.

'I am thinking of all the banned people. The isolation of a banned person is appalling - it's almost like solitary confinement. So many banned people get forgotten, put away in cold storage. The important thing is to keep in touch.'

But she bounces back, positively: 'As Christians, we must try to carry

on living what we believe in, no matter how physically restricted we are and we must remember that Christ never promised His disciples an easy road.'

What the Kotzes have found encouraging and heartwarming has been the support they have been given. In the first two days of the banning, they received over 150 supportive calls and piles of telegrams from all sections of the community- from friends, from people we haven't seen for years, from neighbours, from people off the street and from as far as Switzerland, Holland, the United States, Austria and the U.K.

'They express their solidarity, concern and regret and it's so important.'

A greater responsibility automatically falls on Helen, 'I'll have to do all the simple things that Theo would normally do,' she explained, 'such as collecting somebody from the airport; if one of our friends is in hospital, I'll have to visit them - Groote Schuur is out of our area; he can't visit people who, up till now have relied on him for pastoral care.'

The Kotzes built their home themselves. They've been in it since February. The rooms are light and airy and the garden is splashed with flowers in tidy beds.

They have a daughter, a son and two grandchildren in England, a son and two grandchildren in Durban, two sons and a grandchild in Cape Town.

'Our children have all given us their support and love and wish they could be with us now. Our son in Durban came down to be with us for a few hours but unless the children are living with us, only one at a time, may see my husband as an ordinary visitor.'

'Our chief concern is for the staff of the Christian Institute. There are eight who are now without jobs - one of them has a large family to support. One hopes they won't have difficulty getting new jobs.'

Talking about their future, Helen said, 'we will have to create a new life-style. Theo will have time to read and study now. He's a creative person - perhaps we can channel it into the garden and our home. He's keen on photography.'

Thoughtfully, "I suppose it's a blessing he's married so there is someone who can help.'

Helen showed me the banning order. It was not a formal document. She explained: 'The banning order we received was in Afrikaans. We asked for a translation and we have this one until the formal one comes.'

We talked about their dog, Shadow, 'an old lady,' the garden, and drifted back to the banning. With humour: 'One thing is we've learnt what it's like to be paranoid - we get to the stage where we are convinced we are being followed by six men when there are only two.'

Again serious and with conviction: 'We are only just beginning to realize the implications for my husband though I am still relatively free, but I know his inner strength: He is a Christian minister, called by God and will continue with faith and courage to do what he knows to be right.'

We have since heard that Theo has been attending church regularly and that he has preached. Apparently there is some question whether this is prohibited by the banning order or not, but ministers of religion in the past have usually preached and not been jailed for it. The restriction seems to be that the "sermon must not be about politics."!!

We hear also that Theo and Helen are thinking of starting up a renovating-and-decorating-of-houses-kind of business, as a means of providing some income. We also hear that the Methodist Church has considered their case and is giving them some moral and I think other support. If you want to give some indirect support you could contact me for details.

When I spoke to Theo recently by telephone, he was in very strong spirits and determined to not only persevere through the situation but actually to surmount it. He will appreciate very much hearing from you though of course we can expect that all his mail will be opened. Still letters of support and encouragement should be sent to him at 1 Tasman Street, Claremont 7700, Cape Town, So. Africa.

We have also talked with ~~Brian Brown and Beyers Naude~~ and they too were in very good spirits. A recent letter from Brian indicates that his family is O.K. and we have also heard word from someone else that Cedric Mayson is well too. By the way, Theo commends a book recently published by Juta and Company in Cape Town, called "Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa" by A. S. Matthews. He recommends it as a good statement of the consequences of banning for individuals and organizations.

I am sure Theo and Helen would both want very much to give you their best greetings for the Christmas Season.

Yours sincerely,

*Jim Kirkwood*

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