

DEAR MR STATE PRESIDENT,

1986-02

You said in Parliament "...we have outgrown the outdated concept of apartheid".

We want to believe you.

So much depends on what you mean.

● Apartheid is built on the labelling of people according to their skin colour. We pray that you will rid us of the Population Registration Act. So that all South Africans can at last be people. Nothing more or less.

Then South Africa can believe.

● We welcome your words on law and liberty but you must first convince people who have been bruised by apartheid that the law can be their friend. We pray that you will announce a Bill of Rights that guarantees protection under the law for us all.

Then South Africa can believe.

● We long to see negotiation rather than strife. The only negotiations likely to bring lasting peace will be with leaders who are trusted by their people. We pray that you will release leaders in prison and urban movements in exile. So they can share in the first fully representative negotiations in our history.

Then South Africa can believe.

● Please know that influx control is too deeply resented to be disguised under other laws. We pray that you will announce that any person may move, seek work and own property anywhere in our land. Without ever again needing a permit of any kind.

Then South Africa can believe.

● Education has been the flashpoint of so much violence. It can be the key to peace. We pray that by a "single education policy" you intend to scrap ethnic education departments. And guarantee the same educational opportunity for every one of our sons and daughters.

Then South Africa can believe.

● All of this boils down to one question: who is a South African? You said there will be one citizenship for all. We pray that you will honour that. By announcing the same kind of citizenship for us all. In one South Africa.

Do these things and apartheid will be gone at last. The world will be able to believe. The economic threats will end. Our children who have been driven to war will come home and live together in peace.

To share in the new South Africa.



E.N. Baartman
President of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

This response comes out of our urgent Christian concern for South Africa and its people.

Issued in association with the Secretary of the Conference of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Rev M.S. Mogoba, the Ex-President and Chairman of the South Western Transvaal District, Rev P.J. Storey, the President Elect and Chairman of the Kimberley and Bloemfontein District, Rev J.P. Scholtz, and the Chairman of the Cape of Good Hope District, Rev A.E. Hendricks, Chairman of the Grahamstown District, Rev G. Irvine, Chairman of the Queenstown District, Rev E.N. Baartman, Chairman of the Namibia District, Rev D. Palos, Chairman of the Natal West District, Rev Dr K.E.M. Mgojo, Chairman of the Natal Coastal District, Rev Dr J. Borman, Chairman of the Northern Free State and Lesotho District, Rev K.W. Meaker, Chairman of the South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland District, Rev V.W. Harris, Chairman of the Northern Transvaal and Botswana District, Rev A.F. Learmonth, and Chairman of the Mozambique District, Rev I.D. Mahlalela, of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

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