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ANNEXURE S

Report by Broederkring executive, The onslaught against us, March 3, 1981.

Introduction

During the first few months of 1980 the Broederkring found itself in the midst of a storm in the church. The anger of white leaders in the NGK and NGSK was apparently caused by a series of meetings of the executive of the Broederkring had with churches in Switzerland, Germany and Holland; but this is only partly true. The real reason for their anger lies much deeper: there was bitter dissatisfaction and frustration about a Broederkring which received money from overseas churches, which undertook its own projects, which made statements in the press, and which is seen by many here and overseas as the 'authentic' voice of the black NG churches in South Africa.

It is important to note that there are no differences in principle between the Broederkring and the three black churches on the issues for which the Broederkring stands. There is unanimity on matters such as the unification of the NGK Churches, condemnation of the policy of apartheid (or separate development) as un-Christian and indefensible in the light of Scripture. There is also full agreement over the struggle for a South Africa in which there will be more justice, equality and freedom for all the inhabitants.

The real point at issue — over which the official bodies of the NGK, the NGSK and the NGKA are upset — is their belief that the Broederkring is acting "beyond its competence" and is giving itself the right "to talk in the name of the church". This subtly-prepared attack, which can be clearly seen, makes it necessary for the Broederkring to discuss the real issues at stake in this memorandum.

1. The problems of the NGKA with the Broederkring

These problems are set out in the report of the Moderature, laid before the General Mission Committee of the NGKA on April 1, 1980. It is important to note that while the names of four members of the Moderature appear on the report, the compilation of this document took place without the knowledge or approval of the three black members of the Moderature. (Add. A). The ASK decided at its meeting of April 1 to refer to the document to the Permanent Study Commission for Scripture and Confession to draw up a report. And far as is known, this report has not yet been completed.

2. The problems of the NGSK with the Broederkring

2.1 In *Die Ligdraer* of February 1, 1980, an editorial article by Ds Dawid Botha, moderator of the NGSK, made a stinging attack on the Broederkring under the headline: "Broederkring and Church" (Add B.).

2.2 Dr A Boesak, as chairman of the Broederkring, answered the false accusation and the faulty suppositions of Ds Dawid Botha on February 25 (Add C).

2.3 On August 28, 1980, Dr Boesak received a letter from Ds L J de Bruijn, as clerk of an Ad Hoc Commission of the NGSK appointed by the ASK to investigate the Broederkring, with a request that Dr Boesak appear before the Commission on September 17, 1980 (Add D). Dr Boesak referred the letter to the executive of the Broederkring, which raised the matter with Ds De Bruijn in a letter dated October 24, 1980 (Add E), to which ds De Bruijn answered on December 17, 1980 (Add F).

3. Public reaction to the Broederkring

It is particularly noteworthy that first the NGK and then the government, through Minister Louis le Grange, Minister of Police, entered the dispute at exactly this time.

3.1. On February 12, 1980 (11 days after the article by Ds D Botha appeared in *Die Ligdraer*), the *Kerkbode* published a sharply-worded article, full of insinuations, attacking the Broederkring, from which it was clear that the NGK had gone along with Ds Botha and supported him in his criticism of the Broederkring (Add G).

Dr Allan Boesak answered the *Kerkbode* on February 22 1980, but the editor refused to publish this answer. Dr Boesak's reply eventually appeared in *Dinamos* in the first

quarter of 1980 (Add H).

3.2 Attack by Minister Louis le Grange, Minister of Police

On August 12, 1980, Minister Louis le Grange, in his capacity of Minister of Police, made an attack on the Broederkring in a report in the press, in which he made the following points: "Dr Boesak and his friends had taken a strong attitude to civil disobedience and refusal to do national service and had said the church must initiate and support such programmes. They should reconsider their stand." (*Star*, 13/8/80)

We can clearly see how the well-known pattern is developing, as in the case of the Christian Institute, where the white leadership of the NGSK and the NGK prepared the way for the state to go over to the offensive before the final *coup de grace* is administered.

2. Comment on the contents of the attacks

We believe it to be necessary to refute the following theological and factual distortions of these reports and articles. The report of the Moderature of the NGKA covers practically all the points of criticism of the Broederkring which emanate from the NGSK and the NGK as well, and thus our comment will concentrate on answering this particular criticism.

4.1 False and non-Reformed theology in the NGKA report

4.1.1 The Broederkring is propagating "another theology" (1.5.8 and 1.5.12). We do not know where the compilers of the report come to this conclusion. The Broederkring is not propagating a theology of its own. Its theology is that which is reflected and is grounded on the confessional statements of the NG churches, as can be seen in all the statements of the Broederkring.

The members of the Broederkring are seen as so-called radicals. If by "radical" is meant that the Broederkring wants to apply the full implications of the Gospel in church and community, there can be no cause for complaint, because that is merely a recognition that the Broederkring is carrying out the true work of Christ. It is clear that these statements reflect a false, non-Reformed conception of the church. The Broederkring elevates itself to the position of "the true representatives of the church" (1.5.9, 1.5.11, 1.5.12). In the report the Broederkring is accused of exalting itself as the true representative of the church by involving itself in matters which belong to the sphere of the church. It is clear that these statements reflect a false, non-Reformed conception of the church, i.e. that only official executive bodies have the right to speak on behalf of the church since they represent the true church and they alone can proclaim the true voice of the church of Christ. The well-known Reformed truth that individual members and voluntary associations have just as much right to make their opinions known, to give individual or collective witness, to express justified criticism of the official leadership of the church and concern about unhealthy, doubtful and deviationist tendencies, is thereby totally negated or rejected. This charge is further answered in Add I as well as in Add J (1.5.9).

4.1.3 The Broederkring "already sees itself as an association in competition with the church" (1.5.14 cf also Add I). This statement is devoid of all truth. What the Broederkring does aim at on the grounds of its five clearly stated goals is to combat the false influences and the long-standing infiltration of the false theology or apartheid thinking and practice in the NG churches, which is stifling the life of the younger churches, and to exterminate it root and branch (see also Add J 1.5.14)

4.1.4. The Broederkring is accused of acting in an un-Christian and un-Reformed manner, and is causing confusion "which is aimed at sowing division in the church while ostensibly trying to further unity". (1.5.15) The whole aim of the Broederkring is to effect true unity. The problem is that the NGK does not want to support the unity which the Gospel demands. Why should the Broederkring be accused when it wants to realise the resolution of the three younger NG churches? (See further Add J 1.5.15).

4.1.5 This also applies to the false charge that the Broederkring wants to see itself as "the shadow leadership of the church" (1.5.16) which will at some time take over the leadership of the church. The Broederkring makes no secret that it questions the leadership of white missionaries who occupy key positions in the church, and on the grounds of long and painful experience, distrusts such people who, when things come to a crisis point, without exception choose the side of the NGK against the interests of the

younger churches, as grounded in the demands of Scripture. (See further Add J 1 5 16
4.1.6 The Broederkring "hampers the leading the Holy Spirit" (1.5.17) Here we once again find a seriously mistaken view of the person and of the leading of the Holy Spirit, in that it denies the free working of the Spirit of God, which does not allow itself to be bound or directed by any human action or manipulation. Should the NGKA rather not refer to the numbers of historical instances in which decisions were taken by church meetings, with preliminary calls and claims on the leading of the Holy Spirit, which afterwards were seen as ridiculing of the truth of God's Word and the true essence of the Holy Spirit? (See further Add J 1 5 17).

4.2 Factual distortions in this report

4.2.1 "The Broederkring has no constitution" 1.5.1 The Broederkring has made its goals and basis clear, as set out hereunder

- To achieve organic church unity on all levels congregational, circuit — and synodal — where unity must find expression in church life
- To take seriously the prophetic talk of the church with reference to oppressive structures and laws in Southern Africa, as well as pastoral functions towards the victims of the fear-ridden oppressors who are suffering as a result of the unChristian policy and practice of these countries.
- To work for the triumph of the sovereignty of Christ over the ideology of apartheid or separate development or any other ideology so that a worthy human lifestyle may be pursued in Southern Africa.
- To advance evangelical liberation from injustice, de-humanisation, alienation and lovelessness in church and state
- To support the ecumenical movement and all other organisations inside and outside South Africa which strive to promote the Lordship of Christ over all spheres of life

In addition, the national conference regulates all organisational and administrative matters. The Broederkring does not believe it necessary to establish a constitution since that is merely an administrative regulation which has nothing to do with the essence of the Broederkring as movement.

4.2.2 The Broederkring is seen as a secret organisation 1.5.7. The names of all the ministers of the three younger churches to whom notices of all meetings (regional as well as national) appear on the address list of the Broederkring. To date every issue of the journal *Dinosaar* has been sent free to all these addresses with a request for subscriptions. All regional and national meetings are open, and the activities of the executive are reported at national conference. It is clear that the idea of a secret organisation forms part of those suspicions sown by the *Kerkbode* in its editorial attack on the Broederkring. And what impudence this is coming from an editor who is himself a member of a secret organisation which does not have the courage to make public its convictions and actions in influencing the church!

4.2.3 The Broederkring "has made itself a pressure group within the church in order to force the church to carry out its aims" (1.5.13). The Broederkring denies the charge that it is a pressure group with that aim set out by the NGKA. For not one moment do we deny that we are a movement of a number of ministers and evangelists from all three of the younger NG churches who want to promote their clearly stated aims, as set out in 4.2.1.

It is self-evident that the official leadership of the three NG churches who oppose one or more of these aims or are afraid of promoting them, will reproach the Broederkring with being a pressure group when it takes the lead in saying clearly and openly what it believes on these matters.

The Broederkring is moreover, aware of the long history of ideological and financial bondage of the three younger churches, who are in the grip of the financial pressure and ideological line of the NGK. The Broederkring is seeking and striving to break this diabolical stranglehold. The Broederkring can quote numerous examples of the reluctance or unwillingness of church leaders of official positions (especially under the influence or through manipulation of white missionaries of the NGK) to accept resolutions which are in line with the above-mentioned aims, or to water them down, to delay them and even to block them altogether. To name just one outstanding example in connection with the

resolution on church unity. This decision was taken as far back as 1975, but while there has been very little forthcoming from the side of the NGKA moderation the Broederkring was the only organisation which gave practical effect to the unity of brothers in the three churches. It is therefore very understandable that the moderation would see the action of the Broederkring as a threat and would try to oppose it. See further Add J (1.5.13).

4.2.4 The Broederkring and the KBB (1.5.6). It is clear that there is serious confusion about the position of the Broederkring and the existence and actions of the KBB. The facts are:

While the Broederkring draws its membership from all three of the younger churches, the KBB is an "apartheid-organisation" because it includes only ministers and evangelists from the NGKA. All members of the Broederkring who belong to the NGKA are automatically members of the KBB, which means that serious confusion arises about the actions and decisions of the KBB, but the Broederkring can certainly not be held responsible for that. It is high time that the KBB was suspended and disbanded.

4.2.5 The "control" of overseas bursaries by the Broederkring (1.5.10). It is general knowledge that the NGK has over the years attempted to maintain and strengthen its grip on the younger churches, as well as on their theological students, ministers and evangelists by means of the control which it still has over the financial affairs of the churches and of individual students, ministers and evangelists. Many examples can be quoted of the unwillingness and neglect by the NGK to give the leadership of the three younger churches opportunity to study overseas by means of bursaries, where this has happened, the NGK has attempted to determine at what institutions the students will study. The Broederkring sees it as its duty to do all in its power to break this dangerous control over monies, bursaries and study institutions for once and for all. The Broederkring is also the only organization which can represent all three of the churches when applications are made for overseas theological study. It is not true that all students who receive bursaries through the Broederkring are its members, and this is never made a condition for the granting of a bursary.

It must also be clearly stated that the standpoint of overseas churches is that they are not prepared to support any church in South Africa which defends, condones or promotes on an open or subtle basis, the sinful policy of apartheid (or separate development). It is for this reason that the Broederkring has taken on itself the function of deciding on the award of overseas bursaries, and will continue to do so until the deadly grip of apartheid-ideology, the paternalistic attitude of white missionaries, the manipulation of church meetings, executives and decisions is ended once and for all, and all three younger churches, which are at present held captive by this situation, are liberated to fulfil their task and calling as church of Jesus Christ in South Africa. Should the Broederkring for any reason no longer be able to handle the award of bursaries, that would not mean that that function will automatically be handed over to the apartheid churches.

Conclusion

The executive of the Broederkring wishes to draw attention to the fact that on February 13, 1981, the ASK of the NGKA, made a positive assessment of the Broederkring on the basis of a report submitted by their Commission of Inquiry into the Broederkring. It reads as follows: "There can be no objection to the aims, theological statements and composition of the Broederkring."

"The activities and methods of the Broederkring could not be properly assessed since no meeting with the Broederkring could be arranged. An evaluation on the basis of a thorough enquiry was thus not possible, and your commission did not think it right to express itself without more consideration."

The ASK of NGKS even rejected the recommendation of the commission of inquiry that it be empowered to continue with its investigations. Instead the moderator and assessor were empowered to consult with the Broederkring in order to discuss and to try to clear up points of friction.

On behalf of the executive of the Broederkring